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ABSTRACT

A certified teacher and preschool parent involvement coordinator working in a parochial school designed and implemented a practicum study designed to increase children's success in school and improve the ability of parents and teachers to work effectively with preschoolers. The practicum intervention involved a commitment from the school's director and teachers; the planning and conducting of orientation sessions; assessment of needs of the preschool children, teachers, parents, and the school; development of a parent-teacher education program; and coordination of volunteer services. Evaluation data indicated that the effort was successful. Parents and teachers worked together and used the skills they had acquired to enhance the skills of the preschool children. They were able to identify age-appropriate activities and use effective discipline techniques. Corporal punishment at the school was eliminated. The emphasis on parent involvement increased the number of communications between home and school. The result was an educational partnership between educators, parents, and community volunteers that improved the achievement and behavior of children in the school. Approximately 110 references are cited. Numerous related materials are appended. (RH)

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Improving the Skills of Preschoolers through Parent and Teacher Education

by

Pamela S. Davis

Cluster 21

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1989

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Skills of Preschoolers through Parent and Teacher Education. Davis, Pamela S. 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.

Descriptors: Preschool Program/ Parent School Relationship/ Preschool Education/ Preschool Curriculum/ Preschool Evaluation/ Preschool Children/ Parent Participation

This practicum was designed to facilitate a collaborative effort between the home and school in offering quality educational programs to preschool children. The primary goal was the improvement of readiness skills to increase school success. The secondary goal was to coordinate a parent/teacher training program that focused on increasing their proficiency in working effectively with preschoolers.

The writer sought commitment from the director and the teachers; planned and conducted orientation sessions; assessed the needs of the preschoolers, teachers, parents and school; developed a parent/teacher education program in conjunction with the persons involved; served as a resource person; and coordinated volunteer services.

Overall, the results of the practicum were positive. The parents and teachers worked closely and utilized the skills they acquired to enhance the skills of the preschoolers. They were able to identify age appropriate activities and to use effective discipline techniques. Corporal punishment was eliminated at the school. The emphasis on parent involvement increased the number of home-school communications between the home and school. The end result was an educational partnership between the educators, parents and community volunteers that improved the achievement and behavior of the preschoolers.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Description of Community

The area of city and county was located in one of the nation's southeastern states. It had a population of more than 170,000 people (Chamber of Commerce [COC], 1989) and ranked highly as a prime location for quality urban living, business opportunities, and medical-related manufacturers and clinics. The dominant industries were banks, savings and loans, insurance companies, numerous commercial and entrepreneurial investment organizations and a research park (COC, 1987). As a result of the research park, this community had the highest concentration of doctoral scientists and engineers per 100,000 people in the entire country (COC, 1987).

Most age groups found educational opportunities to be readily available. There was a nationally respected private research university, a predominantly black state university, several colleges, technical schools and a community college in the county. The two public school systems were responsible for educating the majority of the local school age children. The city school system had a population of more than 8,000, a minority enrollment of 85 percent (Hammonds, 1988), a dropout rate of 11.5 percent (State Department of Public Instruction [SDPI], 1988) and a 90.9 percent daily attendance. This was the highest dropout rate and the lowest daily attendance percentage in the state. On the other hand, the county school system had a population of 17,000, a white enrollment of 70 percent (Hammonds, 1988), a dropout rate of 5.6 percent (SDPI, 1988), and a 94.8 percent daily attendance. Both of these systems served students from the kindergarten level through the twelfth grade. In addition, the city school system offered preschool programs for a select number of educationally disadvantaged three- and four-year-old children (Day, 1988).

The majority of the area's preschoolers attended private programs because 69 percent of all mothers with children under age six worked outside of the home (Sereno, 1988). At the time, the private sector was unable to meet the increased need of quality preschool care that resulted from the low unemployment rate, the booming economy, and the wide range of employment opportunities. These factors also contributed to competition for employees among child care centers, businesses and industries since child care workers earned low incomes and received little or no benefits.

With the growing trend for public preschools in this state, private child care programs should have prepared to compete for students as well. In preparation for this competition, child care programs needed to improve the quality of their services. This practicum proposal was written to offer a problem solving activity for improving the achievement and behavior of preschoolers attending a parochial preschool program. The end result provided improvement in the quality of education that the preschoolers received.

The school offered preschool programs for two-, three- and four-year-olds, as well as a kindergarten program and a first grade class. Since the majority of the school's students were economically disadvantaged, they were labeled as "at risk" for school failure.

A commission of church members and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) President governed the school and the state licensed it to serve a maximum of 108 children. Admission was open to all children aged two through six. An exception to the rule may be made in the case of the child who, upon evaluation by the professional staff, appeared to lack the necessary behavioral and emotional skills to succeed in one of the five programs. There have only been three incidents such as this in the last eight years of the school's operation.

A typical day for the children aged two through five included breakfast, supervised free play in learning centers, devotion, story time, special activities, playground activities, songs and finger plays, lunch, nap time, snack, and bathroom breaks. First graders participated in a similar morning schedule but their afternoon schedule was more structured. In each of the five programs the teachers integrated music, art, language and mathematics in the activities.

The positions for teachers of the two-, three- and four-year-olds required a high school diploma and one year of experience working with children. The state provided 20 hours of training yearly for these teachers. The kindergarten and first grade teacher positions required a college degree. Certification in Early Childhood Education was a requirement for the first grade teacher and was preferred for the kindergarten teacher. The school director for the last eight years was an experienced kindergarten teacher. Overall, the staff turnover was relatively low with the exception of the kindergarten position. These teachers frequently transferred to public school systems due to higher salaries and better benefits.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The position of Parent Involvement Coordinator for the preschool groups was voluntary. The writer was an experienced parent coordinator, a trained observer/evaluator and mentor teacher. Her certifications included Guidance and Counseling, Special Education-Behaviorally Emotionally Handicapped, and Vocational Education-Disadvantaged and Handicapped.

The primary function of the writer in this problem solving activity was to coordinate an educational partnership between the educators, parents and community volunteers that improved the achievement and behavior of the preschoolers. The primary responsibilities were to (a) assess the needs of the school, teachers, parents and preschoolers, (b) coordinate parent and teacher training programs focusing on increasing their proficiency in working effectively with preschoolers, (c) assist in planning school events, (d) work with students individually and in groups, (e) coordinate volunteer services, (f) serve as a resource person for teachers and parents, and

(h) maintain a positive working relationships with the director, teachers, parents, preschoolers and community volunteers.

CHAPTER II

Problem Description

The teachers and parents of this school did not place great emphasis upon the team approach in educating their high risk preschoolers. There was an active PTA with participation by parents but, these activities were not enough to reinforce in the home environment the learning that took place at school. Furthermore, the parents and teachers demonstrated a lack of understanding relative to home and school environments connecting with each other in relationship to learning. As a result, the preschoolers lacked the priviledge of receiving an education which significantly improved their achievement and behavior.

Family as well as school related factors contributed to the inadequate school performance of the high risk preschoolers in this low socioeconomic educational environment. The parents and the educators have different perspectives as to why the problem existed. From the parents' perspective, there were several factors that impeded the overall performance of these students. One of the major factors was the shortage of home-school communications. Feedback about the students' progress was seldom shared with the parents. Therefore, the parents were unaware of the progress their children experienced during the day and they felt helpless when trying to decide how to reinforce what the children were learning at school. They preferred closer working relationships with the teachers in hope of helping their children retain more knowledge. Current literature substantiated the parents' feelings by suggesting that preschool learning occurs through repetition and that children will learn more successfully if that which is being taught in the classroom is extended into the home (Eliason & Jenkins, 1986).

In addition, parents felt that lesson plans and schedules should be available or posted. They wanted to know that the school was following the state curriculum guidelines so that their children received a quality education instead of just a babysitting service. Again, Eliason and Jenkins (1986) agreed with them. Their literature encouraged educators to provide parents with the ideas and concepts which they focus on each day if possible, but definitely once a week.

Parents who shared the same viewpoint considered the teachers to be ineffective.

The third factor that the parents felt hindered the children's learning was the curriculum being taught. When questioned as to what they felt would be more appropriate, they basically described a curriculum similar to the "intellectually disadvantaged child" model with music, art and dramatic play included (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). Studies by Weikart and others proclaimed that the average intelligence quotient (IQ) and other measures of competencies of low socioeconomic children were at least five to fifteen points below that of middle class children (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). Consequently, it was understandable that parents would want a more academic curriculum to help the children catch up with more advantaged children (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975).

Corporal punishment was the fourth factor that some of the parents felt prevented the school from providing the children with the best education. Occasionally on surprise visits, parents observed children being spanked. As a general rule, corporal punishment was sometimes useful, especially for the very young child, but it should not be used in school (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). Although parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds usually practiced corporal punishment when disciplining their children, teachers needed to acquire and implement more effective ways to discipline them in school (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). As ironic as it may seem, the teachers also considered discipline a problem. Both groups acknowledged the problem, but they placed the blame on each other. The teachers felt that the parents lacked effective discipline techniques and the parents felt likewise about the teachers.

From the teachers' viewpoint, the parents of these disadvantaged preschoolers were the reason for their being "slow learners". They contended that the parents not only lacked good discipline techniques, but they also lacked the teaching skills necessary to reinforce school work at home, and oftentimes they confused the children (Decker & Decker, 1984).

Another problem that teachers observed was that parents did not provide proper health care for the children. Many children from low socioeconomic backgrounds had more illnesses than the average middle class children (Decker & Decker, 1984). The teachers found this to be true with these preschoolers. The students had many colds and sore throats, and little or no dental care.

These factors made the quality of the preschool program questionable. Essentially, the children were being taught daily, the degree of effectiveness was unknown. As in most schools, the teachers, parents and children were responsible for learning. Unfortunately, these three groups were not working closely together to enhance the learning of the preschoolers. Therefore, the children's behavior and slow learning were a problem.

Problem Documentation

The writer used several methods to document the existence of the problem. Interviewing was the first approach used to gather data because it provided more detailed information (Sax, 1968) and allowed for greater clarification. The director, two teachers, one teacher assistant and two parents were among the participants interviewed.

Observation was the second method used to collect data. The behavior of two teachers, two assistants, one substitute teacher, and forty-four preschoolers was observed periodically (Borg & Gall, 1983) between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. An analysis of the behavior was based on data collected while using a checklist supplied to parents by the local day care council to evaluate child care centers. A formative observation data instrument supplied by the state department of public instruction for teacher performance appraisal was also used. The checklist addressed: (a) the relationship between the teacher and the children; (b) the program; (c) physical aspects, health/nutrition and safety; (d) arrival and departure; (e) mealtime and snacks; (f) indoor activities; and (g) transitions. The formative observation data instrument directed the observations toward the following functions: (a) management of instructional time and student behavior; (b) instructional presentation, monitoring, and feedback; (c) facilitating instruction; (d) communicating within the educational environment; and (e) non-instructional duties. The major improvement needs were documented from these instruments.

A self-assessment form for the teachers was also distributed to collect data. This data along with information acquired from a learning environment checklist was documented.

Informally, the parents, educators and children were observed at the Christmas Program.

The surveying of parents with a questionnaire was the third documentation procedure used. The purpose of the questionnaire was to assess the training needs of the parents and to seek volunteers for the Parent Involvement Planning Committee. The 44 questionnaires were given to the parents during the first week of school in January. A total of nineteen (43%) were returned. Other attempts were made to gather the remaining responses at the parent planning sessions. In addition to the above, the parents were asked to complete a parenting skills self-assessment form.

Interviews. The director acknowledged that more parent involvement was needed. Subsequently, she supported the idea of having a parent involvement problem solving activity in her preschool program. She indicated that the children would learn more if the parents were actively involved in their children's educational experiences.

Contrary to the administrator's view, the teachers felt that parental involvement was already adequate. This was based on the facts that the PTA recently raised $2000 for the school and that most preschools in this area have very limited parental involvement activities. Therefore, these teachers regarded a fund raising activity to be an effective parent involvement program.

The parents interviewed felt that a parent involvement program would assist in developing relationships between the parents and teachers that could improve the students' skills and behavior. They wanted the teachers to share more information about their children's progress with them. They also wanted to be kept informed about what was being taught so that it could be reinforced it at home. With the school putting forth an extra effort, they felt that inactive parents might become more active.

Observations. The three-year-olds and their teacher were observed first. The teacher had difficulty maintaining a high level of time on task. Between 8:30-9:00 a.m., during the supervised free play/ bathroom break, the children sat at their desks talking among themselves and to the observer without benefit of a planned or spontaneous objective, expectation, or direction. The teacher was in and out of the classroom attending to non-instructional duties. At 9:00 a.m. the teacher promptly began the devotion. Within two minutes a child asked to use the bathroom. She dismissed the child and continued the devotion until two more children requested a bathroom visit. At that point, she stopped the lesson and dismissed all of the children who needed to use the bathroom. The teacher's inefficient use of the first half hour resulted in an unnecessary interruption during the devotion and too many wasted moments that could have been used for teaching.

There were many more examples of mismanaged time. Several instances of wasted time included the time span in which the children waited for their classmates to return from the bathroom, the lunch preparation period between 11:00-11:30 a.m., most of the lunch period from 11:30-12:15 p.m. and the time used to prepare the cots. During these long periods of time the children sat idle. Since the teacher did not have an assistant, it would have been beneficial to her and the preschoolers if she had allowed them to help with some of her duties such as setting the table, serving the lunch, cleaning up, and preparing the cots. It would have also been beneficial to the students if the teacher had sat with them at lunch to encourage them to eat their meal, to use proper mealtime conversation and/or to discuss the kinds of food they were eating. Overall, the writer observed at least two hours of wasted time that could have been used as teachable moments. These long delays subsequently caused the children to misbehave and the teacher often used inappropriate and inconsistent behavior management techniques. During the time periods mentioned above, the children sat at their desks. It was unclear to the children and the observer whether or not they had permission to talk. Some of the time she would allow them to talk freely but at other times, without warning, she would demand that they stop talking. Her system of behavior management during these periods was inconsistent and she often wiped the smiles off of their faces with her authoritarian attitude, words and tone of voice.

Since the children had no specified objectives to meet during these periods, they had the opportunity to misbehave. For example, between 8:30-9:00 a.m. the children distributed chewing gum among themselves. During the devotion the teacher discovered that they were chewing the gum while some of the children were in the bathroom and the remaining students stood at attention in front of her desk.

Another example of inappropriate behavior due to mismanaged time, began as the children sat idly waiting for their lunch to arrive. Some of the children began playing with their spoons and napkins which were placed directly in front of them. The teacher became very upset and reprimanded the children. For the most part, she stopped inappropriate behavior promptly, but she was often inconsistent and failed to maintain the dignity of the students. She needed to use more preventive measures, more appropriate discipline techniques and more encouragement of responsibility among the preschoolers.

Her instructional presentation also needed some improvement. At the beginning of each instructional activity, it would have been helpful for her to state the objective or purpose of the session in terms that the children could understand. Instead, she went from one activity to another. If she had given more explanation to the children when she asked questions for independent practice, the children would have had a higher rate of success. As reinforcement she should have provided the children with a summary after each activity to smooth the transition and provide closure to the activity. Her success rate was high but it could have been higher if she had reviewed the material first, helped the students practice and then initiated independent practice.

Facilitating instruction was another function that this teacher needed to improve. She did not adhere to the learning strategies for preschoolers. For example, the children were required to recite long scriptures. There was no sign of record keeping or samples of the children's work displayed. Nor was there evidence of instructional strategies, feedback or progress of the children.

The four-year-olds and their teachers were observed between 9:40 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., the planned activity, and between 2:30-3:00 p.m., the afternoon snack. During the 50 minutes when the teacher was observed she followed the majority of the practices necessary to be considered an effective teacher. She was very positive, her discipline techniques were effective, and she used every minute to teach something. The children were on task, well behaved, enthusiastic about learning and seemed happy. Nevertheless, her learning environment needed some attention. A few of the learning centers had labels coming down or were not labeled. There was no evidence of the students' progress other than while she instructed. The class schedule was not posted. As for teaching, the teacher could probably benefit from more knowledge about individualized instruction, record-keeping and helping the children to be more responsible. The children were not observed in the centers nor were they allowed out of their seats unless they were participating in a group activity.

The teacher assistant, on the other hand, had serious behavior management problems with her own child. Her child was a member of the two-year-old group. The teacher assistant for that class informed the mother that her child was being aggressive. When she was notified that the child became aggressive again the mother went to the classroom and spanked her in everyone's view. Since it was her child, this was not a violation of the state regulations, but it was inappropriate to administer corporal punishment in school (Brophy, Good & Nedler, 1975). She definitely needed training in behavior management and fortunately she requested it on her parent questionnaire. She could also benefit from effective approaches to toilet training and giving her child more responsibility.

The two-year-olds, their regular teacher assistant and a substitute teacher from the kindergarten class were observed between 10:00 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. and during a brief portion of the afternoon snack. The first 15 minutes were spent observing the children rehearse for the Christmas Program. The two- and three-year olds performed together. They sang five songs and recited a long scripture and a poem. At 10:15 a.m. the two-year-olds returned to their classroom to continue their coloring, number and animal lessons from the planned activity period.

Management of instructional time was a problem for these teacher assistants as well. Too much time was spent gathering materials and supplies. These poor transitions created an atmosphere conducive for misbehavior.

These teachers would also benefit from more effective behavior management techniques. Twice during transition periods a child was physically aggressive toward another child. Neither teacher was monitoring the behavior of the children and subsequently did not see the incidents. It was brought to their attention by the observer because the attacks were so severe.

For punishment the regular teacher assistant sent the child to time out for ten minutes. The mother of the child, the assistant for the four-year-olds, was summoned after the second attack. She came to the classroom and spanked the child.

On another occasion, a student was sent to time out for 15 minutes because he was unable to adapt a new behavior to an old activity quickly enough. While the child was in time out he missed his motor skills, music and body parts lessons.

The writer was unable to observe the beginning of the planned activity since the lesson began earlier in the morning. However, upon returning to the classroom the teachers neglected to review the color, number and animal for the day to reinforce the earlier lesson. One of them simply passed out the worksheet and told the children to finish coloring it.

To make matters worse, the substitute teacher failed to act as a team member. Only once during the one and one half hours did she attempt to assist the assistant or the children and that was upon the request of the assistant. She watched the other classes rehearse for the remaining time. Each of these teachers needed additional training in working together as a team. The regular teacher assistant would also benefit from assertiveness training so she would get the assistance she needed. In turn, she could teach the child who was being assaulted to speak up for himself or teach the group how to resolve conflicts among themselves.

These were some of the most obvious improvements needed. The school would also benefit from having a schedule posted in each classroom, new materials, supplies and equipment, and diagnostic teaching.

At the Christmas Program, the educators, students and parents were observed. All of the preschoolers participated except one, and the parents were also in attendance. The King and the Queen were crowned as a reward for selling the most tickets for the PTA.

Questionnaire. Less than half of the forms were returned. Of the nineteen parents responding, sixteen volunteered to work on the Parent Involvement Planning Committee and sixteen or more were interested in each of the areas suggested for parent training (See Appendix A).

Causative Analysis

Being funded privately and having a majority enrollment of economically disadvantaged children caused some of the problem. The fees were low enough for the parents to afford it, yet high enough to maintain the operating expenses. In this school, limited funding restricted the number of employed staff members, increased the number of employee work hours and significantly affected the quality of the preschool education provided. For instance, the part time director who had been employed at the school for 12 years, arrived after the lunch period and left around 6:00 p.m. Subsequently, she was unavailable to serve as the instructional leader or to monitor whether or not the school's policies and the state regulations were being followed. Her work hours were short and she primarily attended to administrative and managerial duties. Her assistant director, the teacher for the three-year-olds, had worked there for 20 years. She arrived at 6:30 a.m. and left at 4:30 p.m. Even though she had extra duties, she did not have a teacher assistant nor did she desire to have one. The remaining teachers arrived at 8:00 a.m. and departed at 5:00 p.m. They all had part time jobs. The teachers' long work day was less than ideal because it contributed to promoting ineffective teachers. Long work hours left very little time for teachers to plan for the children or live their own lives in a wholesome manner.

In addition to the insufficient staffing pattern, the learning environment also had its flaws due to the limited funding. The children were easily distracted since the groups were located in a large church basement and their classes were partitioned by curtains. The three-year-old group meets on the stage. On each side of the stage was a door. One was the entrance to the school and the other was the entrance to the kitchen, the director's office, and the classrooms for the kindergarten and first grade. The traffic was very distracting but it allowed the assistant director to monitor the traffic flow in the absence of the director. The two- and four-year-olds met on opposite sides of the room. When the assistant director closed the curtains to the front of the stage, this signaled the other teachers to pull their curtains and begin the devotion. These classes were distracted less when the curtains were closed.

Limited funding also reduced the number of learning centers, supplies and modern equipment available.

Although each class had learning centers none of the children were observed playing in them. It was difficult to pinpoint why the children did not use the learning centers for independent play activities other than the fact that the schedule was flexible due to the rehearsal. With that assumption, the change in schedule was probably why the children were not observed being able to make any choices.

Another reason the children achieved at a slow rate was that too many of the routine tasks were done for them. The preschoolers were quite capable of assisting the teachers in setting the tables, cleaning up, and getting materials or supplies. For the most part, the children were kept in their seats, sitting quietly. It was the writer's assumption that this was a part of their behavior management plan which was less than ideal because children needed to learn how to move around appropriately in the classroom.

In the classrooms of the two- and three-year-olds an excessive amount of time was wasted. These teachers were not skilled in using every available moment as a teaching experience nor did they realize the importance of conversing with the children to develop their language skills. These children were slow to learn how to express themselves for this reason.

The lack of a planning period was another cause of the problem. Team planning, planning individualized instruction, writing progress reports, or parent communications were not evident. Part of the nap time was an ideal time for teachers to plan behavior management strategies and to develop methods which would improve the children's skills.

In summary, the causes of the problem were multi-faceted. The limited funding, the number of employee work hours and the employee schedules were among the major causes of the problem. Additionally, the classroom setting, the program objectives, the teaching strategies, the behavior management techniques, and the limited teacher inservice training and parental involvement also contributed to the problem.

The Related Literature

The term "preschool education" in this review of literature focused on providing quality educational programs for children who were two to four years of age. Throughout this country and around the world there were numerous models, programs, and philosophies relating to preschool programming. As of yet, no one particular program was cited as the best, although there were programs that were highly regarded in the field of education.

One of the most renowned preschool studies for disadvantaged preschoolers was sponsored through the High/Scope Education Research Foundation. The foundation contributed the "high quality" of education at its Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan to these features: (a) program management and monitoring was a top priority; (b) parents and teachers worked together frequently to educate the children; (c) well-trained staff used the team approach to provide the adequate program for each child; (d) a large portion of the time was spent with adults interacting with the students; (e) the program designated theories of learning and a specific curriculum for use by the staff members; (f) curriculum training for staff members took place on a continuous basis; and (g) the goals were assessed frequently (Eliason & Jenkins, 1981).

Project Head Start was another program for disadvantaged preschoolers. In the seventies, the reputation of this program increased as the research findings indicated that the long term effects of the program were positive (Fischer & Lazerson, 1984).

Both of these programs advocated preventive preschools for disadvantaged children and the involvement of the family and the community (Project Head Start, 1967; Edelman, 1987-88) in their educational experiences. Their longitudinal research results also indicated that students who attended these programs were retained less, in fewer remedial programs, received higher intelligence test scores, dropped out of school less and went to college more often than disadvantaged preschoolers who were not enrolled in such programs (Edelman, 1987-88; Fischer & Lazerson, 1984).

These results not only led educators and psychologists to advocate more preschools, but economists became concerned that the nation will be led by an incompetent generation in the near future

(Meyers, 1988). They informed us that the nation could save the multi-billion dollars it will spend on remedial education, welfare payments for the parents, welfare payments for the children when they become adults, undereducated prison inmates, and lost productivity in the workforce if preschools were readily available to disadvantaged youth (Meyers, 1988).

Government statistics showed that: (a) preschools serve less than 30 percent of the children needing services; (b) the number of households headed by women increased from 4.4 million in 1960 to 9.4 million in 1982; (c) the average annual income of a working single mother was $10,076, and (d) child care costs were around $3,000 annually (Smith, 1988). Even though some mothers of preschoolers were not working, twenty-six percent or 1.7 million of them said that they would work if they could afford child care services and 13 percent or 700,000 of the employed mothers of preschools would work more hours if quality child care was available (Hellmich, 1988).

Educators, on the other hand, became more concerned as the crisis in child care continued because it was unlikely that all of the programs opening across the country would be of "high quality". The demand for preschools steadily increased since 50.8 percent of the mothers who had babies last year returned to work or were job hunting ("Study", 1988). In 1986, the Census Bureau reported that the percentage of working mothers was 49.8, whereas, in 1976, it was only 31 percent. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the year 2000, 61 percent of all women will be working and half of all six-year-olds will have working mothers (Smith, 1988). Essentially, mothers and two-career families contributed to the preschool crisis (Meyers, 1988).

Unfortunately only ten percent of all employers provided on site child care facilities or provided referral services (Hellmich, 1988). In spite of the facts that turnover rates and absenteeism is one fourth less for parents with children in preschools, companies feared providing child care services because of childless employees (Meyers, 1988). Although most companies neglected to assist parents with child care, a few were pioneers. In Tennessee, 100 companies adopted measures to assist employees with young children (Lourdeaux, 1988). Businesses in this state and across the nation were also prompted to help parents because they were suffering from high absenteeism and low productivity because of inadequate child care services. To eliminate the problem, a few of the businesses provided benefits or free child care services. One company reported that their program was expensive but it cost less to take on the children than to retrain employees (Lourdeaux, 1988). Another business offered three months leave, three month phase-in and free referral service for good quality child care. Similarly, one company helped three child care programs reach stability. It would be beneficial to the nation if businesses offered child care services and/or benefits but as it stood, the government had to work on upgrading this societal problem.

Fortunately, federal grants were provided for 20 Chapter I public preschool programs for 1,400 disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds in North Carolina (Day, 1988). Just ten years ago only three of these programs existed and in 1987-88 ten preschool programs were established (Day, 1988).

The state government made efforts to increase the number of child care and preschool programs because sixty five precent of its mothers work (Lourdeaux, 1988). This state had the nation's highest percentage of working women and subsidized child care services for 15,000 families, yet another eligible 10,000 received no support (Lourdeaux, 1988). To remedy this problem, three to five million dollars was proposed for the 1989 school year to provide preschool programs that stress early development skills and not academics for three-

and four-year-olds (O'Connor, 1988, May 26). Preschool children from disadvantaged families were offered the state funded classes to get them ready for kindergarten ("Governor", 1988). This was one the state's efforts to reduce the 6.5 dropout rate and the 1.7 million number of illiterates ("Literacy", 1987). The program was structured accordingly: (a) the centers will be opened 11 hours a day for 12 months a year but the children will not be required to spend all of that time in the center; (b) the ratio will be two adults per 16 students; and (c) the program will assist the children in developing a sense of self worth, a respect for the physical environment, personal responsibility, how to work with other children, and to develop the children's natural curiosity and their abilities to conceptualize ideas, express thoughts and make decisions (O'Connor, 1988, May 12). The legislators voted to place the three- and four-year-olds with the Department of Public Instruction and the handicapped children, from birth to age three, with the Department of Human Resources (Surratt, 1988).

At the local level, the community also worked to increase the number of preschool programs. The county school system accepted a $100,000 PIPE Plus Program grant to help three- and four-year-olds from anywhere in the county who had speech and language delays

(Surratt, 1988). The city school system organized a preschool program for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds. The county received a "CHILD Project" (Children with Handicaps Integrated In Day Care) grant to meet the regulations of Public Law 99-457. It guaranteed every handicapped child, from birth to age five, the right to a public preschool education, beginning in 1991 (Surratt, 1988). Preschoolers in the county's 100 plus child care facilities were screened and the staff members were trained to do pre-screening (Surratt, 1988).

Even with these programs in place the local day care council was actively seeking persons to provide child care services because of the large demand. Since the average citizen needed assistance in setting up adequate child care services, the local day care council recruited and trained the local citizens.

Likewise, the number of preschool programs increased through various means across the nation. At least 3,000 of the country's 15,000 school districts offer varied programs for preschoolers aged two to five (National Education Association [NEA] , 1987). The National Education Association (NEA) supported preschool programs that gave these children effective preparation for kindergarten, as long as trained, certified teachers and aides led the youngsters (NEA, 1987).

Although the number of preschool programs increased, inadequate child care services were common to the local community as well as across the nation. There were only 32 inspectors to cover 2,000 licensed day care facilities in this state (Lourdeaux, 1988). In addition to not having enough inspectors, there was a high turnover rate (Sereno, 1988) and the salaries were low for child care workers. Salaries in private preschool programs ranged from $8,000 to $10,000 but in the public school, the salary averaged around $20,000 ("Child Care", 1988). The competitive salaries caused preschool educators to seek employment in public schools for higher pay and benefits.

To improve the quality of preschool programs it was essential to have well-trained employees. Preschool educators received their academic training through various means. Normally, the administrator and the teacher attended a college or university while the teacher assistant acquired skills from two year institutions or through on-the-job training programs.

The role of the preschool educators was very important. Depending on the setting, the administrator was usually the principal or the director. In the better schools, the administrator had teaching and administrative experience in early childhood education (Danoff, Breitbart & Barr, 1977). The role of the administrator was to manage the entire program. The administrator determined the budgeting, purchasing, selecting of staff members, scheduling of facilities, meals, transportation and the hours of operation (Brophy, Good & Nedler, 1975). The role of the preschool teacher was to manage the classroom activities (Brophy, Good & Nedler, 1975). The teacher was an observer, a reflector, an elaborator, a model, an evaluator, and a planner for the preschool child's learning experiences (Gullo, 1985). The preschool teacher assisted the child in exploring through activities such as independent play, peer interactions, sensory or manipulatory experiences, language exchanges, playing with things, spontaneous activities and specially planned activities in learning centers (Gullo, 1985). These activities improved the preschooler's social interaction, physical mastery and manipulation, sensory stimulation and perception, emotional well-being, communication and language (Gullo, 1985). The teacher assistant functioned in a supportive role to the preschool teacher. As a team, they planned and taught the preschool program (Brophy, Good & Nedler, 1975). Oftentimes it was difficult for an observer to distinguish the teacher from the teacher assistant because they both conducted learning activities (Danoff, Breitbart & Barr, 1977). However, the teacher assistant had less teacher training and received less pay than the teacher.

Teacher training programs varied. In the 1900s formal early childhood teacher training programs began (Decker & Decker, 1984). As time passed, undergraduate and graduate programs were available to persons interested in teaching and administering early childhood programs. Later, associate degrees in early childhood became available to teacher assistants. An associate degree in this state prepared the students to provide for the emotional, mental and physical needs of young children by assisting the teacher in planning, implementing and supervising activities in music, science, art, language, math, health, safety and discipline methods ("Early", 1987).

Each teacher training program had its own goals and objectives which were based on the individual institution's philosophy of what the preschooler needed. However, most institutions did agree that educators of preschoolers needed to: (a) acquire knowledge about theories as they relate to growth and development; (b) practice a variety of teaching methods to accommodate individual needs and learning styles;

(c) observe and record the behavior of preschoolers; (d) plan activities based on the data observed; (e) plan, organize and assess the curriculum; (f) be creative in curriculum planning; (g) use a number of age appropriate activities from the curriculum; (h) gain knowledge about philosophies and goals of preschool curriculums; (i) facilitate language development in the preschoolers; (j) use play to stimulate growth with the preschooler; (k) practice effective means of communicating with parents; and (l) develop appropriate ways of encouraging parent involvement to foster the preschooler's optimum growth (Bergstrom & Margosian, 1977).

Most of the teacher training institutions developed their educational philosophies from persons who influenced early childhood education. In the 1800s, Friedrich Froebel, the father of kindergarten concept, was the first to write a book describing his philosophy and his organized sequential program to aid children in their intellectual, physical and moral development through play and materials (Broman, 1982). In addition to the above, he wrote a book with play activities for mothers and their children to promote growth development and learning (Decker & Decker,1984). Jean Piaget, another philosopher, approached preschool learning in a similar manner in reference to play. He considered play as children's work. Piaget's theory regarding preschool education enabled the child to develop his total cognitive framework so that he/she would be able to apply it to any task including classification, arithmetic, and reading (Broman, 1988). He theorized that when a child reached a certain level, he would automatically be able to solve many problems, which he never encountered, (Braun, 1972) through problem solving, imitation, practice, and play activities (Schuster, Shaw, & Ashburn, 1980). The successful Perry Preschool Project based its theory of teaching and curriculum on Piaget's educational foundation (Broman, 1982). Another philosopher, John Dewey (1859-1952) was also influential in the education of young children. He created a program for children aged four and five which had a unified curriculum, work activities, self-directed activities, and an emphasis on science (Broman, 1982). Many schools continue to use his "My Pedagogic Creed" as their institution's educational philosophy. Another philosopher, Maria Montessori, designed dressing frames, sandpaper numbers and letters, movable alphabet letters, pictures and sounds, colored circles, scent bottles, sound bottles, command cards, rough and smooth board, finger paint and clay (Broman, 1982).

In the Child Study Movement, Bird Baldwin, Arnold Gesell and G. Stanly Hall set the stage for research by collecting normative data (Broman, 1982). This philosophy was opposed by followers of John Dewey who believed that preschool education was developmental (Broman, 1982).

Abigail Eliot was influential in changing the look of preschool facilities. Small furniture, low window sills, sinks, toilets and faucets, a pool, a sandbox, a nurse and the formation of positive habits can be found in some form in all preschool programs. The philosophers mentioned, along with many others, influenced educational programming for preschoolers. However, all of their philosophies, programs, methods and materials have been revised to accommodate the changing times.

As the demand for quality preschools continued, teacher training became an ongoing process (Karnes, 1971) through inservice offerings. One method of keeping the teachers' and teacher assistants' skills up to date was to provide the needed inservice training (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). Inservice training usually began with new teacher orientation sessions when a new employee was introduced to the school's program structure, its facility and its services (Decker & Decker, 1984).

Assessing the needs of the personnel was the first step in providing successful inservice training. In this state behavior management was a top priority because spanking as part of the religious training for preschoolers was banned ("Child safety", 1988). The commission believed, as most teacher trainers did, that corporal punishment should not occur in child care centers ("NC panel", 1988). Unfortunately, the church-run child care centers planned to take the matter to court instead of retraining their staff members.

One inservice training strategy that helped teachers to reduce discipline problems was to teach them how to design a learning environment for preschoolers. It was found that the arrangement of a room affected the children's behavior (Danoff, Breitbart & Barr, 1977). Beaty (1984) encouraged preschool teachers to use his field-tested activity area room checklist to assess the classroom areas for block building, books, dramatic play, large motor activities, manipulative activities, art, music, science, math, sand and water play, woodworking, cooking, and child's private area. When these areas were well-defined the children could make choices, become involved in their work and the teacher could be an observer who enters play at the "critical moment"

(Danoff, Breithart & Barr, 1977). In evaluating a room, it was suggested for the teacher to see if the room initiated independence. When the children were able to initiate their own activities by easily locating the materials and equipment they needed for an activity without the teacher, and when it did not create behavior problems, it was a good room arrangement.

Ann Clewett (1988), a teacher educator, proposed that teachers use the following preventive measures to promote appropriate behavior: (a) understand that children behave the way they do because of their personal experiences; (b) provide a variety of activities to capture the interests of the students; (c) maintain a basic daily schedule alternating active and inactive activities with smooth transitions so the children will not get restless waiting on the other students to complete their work; (d) work with small groups of children instead of the entire group, and (e) consider and plan for the children's individual differences and learning skills.

Planning the appropriate preschool program was another step recommended for improving the learning environment. Cassidy, Myers and Benion (1987), all faculty members in a Department of Human and Family Resources, reminded teachers to be aware of the parents' goals and values as well as their own when planning for preschoolers. They suggested reviewing activity books for ideas that prompted the children to carry out the activity and determine the content while the teacher structured the time, space and the materials. They also warned teachers not to plan objectives without determining the interests, developmental abilities, skills and learning styles of the children or the parents' values and goals. They advised new teachers to write detailed lesson plans until they were experienced enough to rely on past experiences. They recommended that the teachers plan their curriculum on the basis of a particular child's or group's needs. When focusing on a skill, they used a step-by-step procedure. The teachers allowed the student or group to experience the activity with the same materials (constant), then changed the materials for the same activity (horizontal movement), and finally advanced or lowered the skill level based on the student's or group's needs.

Of course, the developmental approach to diagnostic teaching can only be successful if the teacher had skills in assessing and recording the progress of the students. The most common method used for assessment in this state was observation, since the state did not allow standardized testing before the third grade (O'Connor, 1988, May 16). Even though these and other educators considered observations to be biased, they did agree that a skilled observer could determine the level of performance of a child or group of children. Standardized and teacher-constructed tests were also used to assess the skill levels of the children. The teacher's skill in standardized test administration and test construction along with the children's skills in test taking all affected the validity of the results of these assessment methods. Once the teacher collected this information it was wise to save samples of the children's work to be discussed in parent-teacher conferences and recorded in the students' folders. Likewise, it was beneficial to keep an anecdotal record of the students' developmental progress for conferences, transfer records and curriculum planning.

Inservice training in the subject areas was also beneficial in updating teachers' skills. Richardson (1988), another college professor, agreed that reading aloud to children was one of the best strategies for teaching pre-reading skills. In her study, daily read-a-loud time improved reading skills. By choosing books that interested children, the barrier of unfamiliar words was reduced. Introducing the stories, letting the children compare their experiences, talking about the characters, and allowing them to predict what might happen all served to enhance creativity and improve skills through listening, discussion, art, music, drama and writing.

Physical development was another important area of preschool programming of which teachers needed to keep abreast. Joye Newman (1988), a perceptual motor specialist, encouraged outdoor play for the preschoolers to develop the gross motor skills such as creeping, crawling, walking, jumping, hopping, skipping, galloping, throwing, catching, climbing, striking and kicking. According to her the development of these skills accentuated pre-reading and writing skills (Newnan, 1988).

To diversify the curriculum, educators needed to learn how to work with volunteers. In Colorado, a Head Start program received a grant to develop a model playground for preschoolers which could also be used as a training site for teachers of the community. A grant and local funding were secured to complete the playground. It was designed to encourage motor, dramatic, social and constructive play (Wardle, 1987).

Another professor encouraged teachers to use the medical personnel to help preschoolers become more familiar with medical procedures and equipment to reduce their fears (Mather, 1988).

Across the country, volunteer home economists were teaching Head Start preschoolers units on nutrition (Koblinsky & Phillips, 1987). As a result, the American Home Economics Association developed a national program to train home economists to serve as Volunteer Nutrition Consultants to Head Start.

Although these volunteers were important to preschool programs, the use of parents as volunteers was more important. When community volunteers and parents were involved, they contributed to the child's total development (Project Head Start, 1967). Training teachers how to work with parents was essential. A study by Reginald Clark, with low income students, proved that the parents did not possess the skills to help their children improve their achievement (Berliner, 1988). In these cases, teachers needed to be able to teach parents how to teach their children. Berliner (1988) stressed that teachers and schools on a whole would rather classify these parents as unconcerned rather than commit themselves to choosing methods of effective communications. Most of the conferences with these parents were spent discussing behavior or attendance problems, rather than helping the parents to help their children. It was also found that the parents felt uncomfortable dealing with school personnel. To combat the problems Casanova (1988) suggested targeting a group of students, selecting a skill they did well and sending a positive note home. Assignments to be completed at home by the parents and children were sent. The personnel met with the parents, to learn about the family and share school activities with the parents. They were also to maintain close communication and compliment parents for their efforts.

Throughout their careers, teachers needed to be updated on skills in parent-teacher conferences (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987) and how to get parents involved in the school program (Maurer, 1985). Once the teachers were trained in effective ways of communicatiing with parents, they began to help parents develop strategies in how to help their children improve their test scores and social habits (Schmitt, 1986).

David Elkind (1986; 1988), a noted professor of child study, suggested that teachers warn parents of "miseducating young children". He felt that it was the teacher's role to explain to parents that early instruction was harmful to preschoolers . He also advocated teaching parents how to reduce the stress for their children (1982). In Virginia, parents were being taught what kinds of questions to ask their children about what they learned in school ("VES", 1988).

According to them, it only took two minutes a day to discuss the school's activities.

The Carolina Parent printed articles that helped parents in the following areas: (a) toys under $10; (b) VCR videos for kids; (c) evaluating day care services; (d) tips on traveling with children; (e) planning for special children; (f) how to prevent power struggles with preschoolers; (g) reading aloud to children; (h) software for children; (i) hiking with children and many more.

Even the local studies completed by the state university supported the theory that what was done in the home was highly correlated with a child's achievement (Sanders, 1988). Their findings suggested that the best way to help a child in the classroom was to work with the parents on home education.

Without a doubt, it was important to educate parents of preschoolers as well as it was to educate the personnel who worked with the children. To help reduce the illiteracy rate, educate more technological workers, and break the cycle of disadvantaged parents continuing to have more disadvantaged children, this state and fourteen others were administering programs where parents and preschoolers attended school together ("Parents", 1988). The parents studied for their high school diploma, learned employability skills and how to teach their children. The preschoolers learned how to follow directions, organize shapes, identify colors and other school readiness skills. The test results showed that the children were mastering the skills being taught and several parents had job prospects for the first time in their lives and one parent even graduated. The administrators felt that the program was successful. However, the results were based only on a three month period. Although these programs sought out unemployed, illiterate parents, research advocated educating parents of preschoolers who earned high school diplomas and who maintained jobs in how to teach their preschoolers. As a matter of fact, Missouri made the availability of parent education mandatory after 20 years of research (Meyerhoff & White, 1986). The research was derived from the Harvard Preschool Project which enrolled a group of above average preschoolers from a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In a few years, it became evident that not offering parents the assistance they needed to help the children caused more stress, and reduced pleasures in learning. In the pilot programs, the parents were all first time parents in the third trimester of pregnancy who continued until the child was three. Contact with the parents was from one to one and one half hours every month. Nearly 90 percent of the participants completed the program and the children scored well above average with intellectual and linguistic development. Of course, we must keep in mind that all of the children were the first born children which automatically made them more intelligent (Meyerhoff & White, 1986). This program probably would not work in situations where children had special needs.

Although, across the nation, the number of handicapped children in preschools was increasing, the preschool educators and parents were untrained to work with them as reported by a local kindergarten teacher. She described her 20 students as very diversified. Eight of the students lived with single parents, some were born to teenagers, some lived in poverty, and one child's mother died of alcoholism and his father was in prison ("Kindergarten teachers", 1988). These children had yet to learn their colors and shapes and one was hyperactive. Statewide the percentage in retention had increased from .5 percent in 1975-76 to nearly six percent in 1984-85. The educators failed to meet the needs of the kindergarten students who should have been experiencing success instead of failure. The students were experiencing a lot of stress and were suffering from school burnout at an early age. Consequently, it was essential that parents and teachers learn more about teaching preschool children with special needs in the mainstream. In one experiment where handicapped students attended preschool with nonhandicapped students, they did not experience progress at the rate of their nonhandicapped peers but the learning of the nonhandicapped students was not hindered (Jenkins, Speltz & Odom, 1985). The teachers of these children rated highly in praising, prompting, criticizing, giving directions, commenting, interpreting and in trading toy materials.

Parents with handicapped preschoolers were taught to: (a) establish routine eating, sleeping, schoolwork and play periods; (b) minimize distractions; (c) give single commands and demonstrate if necessary; (d) refrain from overstimulating; (e) help improve coordination through play; (f) make their child feel loved; and (g) use effective discipline techniques (Knox, 1974).

Consequently, the research showed evidence that parents as well as teachers needed training in how to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and handicapped preschoolers in order that they be prepared for kindergarten.

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Statement of General Goals

The major goal of this practicum was to provide a problem solving activity which facilitated a collaborative effort between the home and the school in offering quality educational programs for preschool children. The observed problem was the slow academic learning rates and the developmentally delayed behavior which targeted these preshoolers as potentially high risk for school failure. For this activity, a variety of techniques and strategies were developed and implemented to: (1) improve the achievement level of the preschoolers; (2) improve the behavior of the preschoolers; (3) improve teacher and parent knowledge of effective discipline techniques for preschool children; (4) improve parent and teacher knowledge of age-appropriate developmental skills for preschool children; and (5) increase the frequency of communication between the parents of the preschoolers and the teachers.

Behavioral Expectations

It was projected through the following objectives that the above goals would be met. By the end of the practicum implementation;

1. the preschoolers will improve their achievement as evidenced by observation and progress reports.

2. the number of corporal punishments will decrease by 100 percent in the preschool programs as evidenced by the teachers' logs and observation.

3. the teachers and parents will demonstrate their knowledge by scoring at least 70 percent on the effective discipline techniques test (See Appendix B).

4. the teachers and parents will demonstrate their knowledge by scoring at least 70 percent on the developmentally appropriate activities for preschoolers test (See Appendix C).

5. the teachers will demonstrate their knowledge of developmentally appropriate expectations for preschoolers as evidenced by their daily lesson plans and observation.

6. the communication contacts between the parents and teachers will increase by 50 percent as evidenced by the teachers' logs.(See Appendix D).

Evaluation Instruments

Objective number one, the improvement of student achievement, was assessed through observation and teacher progress reports.

Objective number two, the improvement of student behavior, was assessed by the observation of effective discipline techniques and by the elimination of corporal punishments.

Objective number three, the improvement of teacher and parent knowledge of effective discipline techniques, was measured by a ten item writer constructed multiple-choice test administered following the completion of the effective discipline training course.

Objective number four, the evaluation of the teachers′ and parents′ knowledge of age appropriate activities, was measured by a ten item writer constructed multiple-choice test.

Objective number five, the teachers′ knowledge of planning age appropriate activities was evaluated by the review of daily lesson plans and observation.

Objective number six, the increase of the frequency of communications between the preschoolers′ parents and teachers, was measured by the number of parent and teacher communications recorded by the teachers on a weekly tally during the practicum period. The report form specified the type of contact which occurred and who initiated the contact.

Test data and tally results were analyzed by the responses on the tests, number and type of parent-teacher contacts and the elimination of corporal punishment. The progress reports and observation data from parents and teachers were used to develop individualized educational plans for the children. The appropriate training for the parents and teachers was based on the writer's observations, lesson plans and the parent and teacher questionnaires. The goal and objectives were met when the stated performance level was accomplished. Data from several of the activities were presented in tables.

CHAPTER IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solution

A priority of preschool programs for disadvantaged children was the improvement of their readiness skills to increase school success. To accomplish this goal, parents and teachers needed training in communicating with each other and in team planning in order to enhance their educational roles (Swick & Duff, 1979). Through cooperative efforts by parents and teachers, they educated each other. Parents assisted the teachers in understanding their children better, while teachers aided the parents in understanding the developmental levels, the curriculum, and the learning process of their preschoolers (Stone, 1987).

Research indicated that the efforts of parents and teachers working together brought about increased effective learning levels for children. A prime example, the Mascoutah program (Schmitt, 1986), was a concept that prepared four-year-olds for kindergarten through the use of the following parental involvement activities: (a) teachers met with the children and a parent or a parent substitute for ninety minutes per week for 30 weeks; (b) parents were given six daily activities that they and the children worked on the following week; (c) parents observed the classroom scene through a one-way mirror for 20 minutes while receiving guidance from a parent instructor; (d) the observation session was followed by a discussion of the home activities from the previous week; and (e) the parents and teachers reviewed the comment sheets that parents wrote about the home activities. Indicators of success in the project included: (a) an average yearly increase on the Caldwell Preschool Inventory; (b) a high attendance rate of parents and children; (c) parental feedback on weekly evaluation sheets; and (d) increased parent involvement - 92 percent of the parents used a minimum of 85 percent of the home activities (Schmitt, 1986).

In addition to the above components, high school students from the local school district assisted the educators in teaching recognition of numbers, colors, and shapes. They also assisted in teaching development of fine motor skills, and language development in the areas of word concepts, expressive language, and listening skills (Schmitt, 1986). The students participated in observing, evaluating and reporting the children's progress. This information was shared with the parent educator, the preschool teacher and the parents on a regular basis.

There were several merits to this model program. There was an overall cost effectiveness operation through the use of parents and school volunteers. Stimulating home environments were created which affected all persons in the household (Schmitt, 1986). Practical teaching experiences were provided for high school students interested in preschool education careers. Therefore, the program was viewed as successful due to the documented educational progress of disadvantaged children, the use of community volunteers and facilities and the career exploration and training provided to high school students.

The settings, the populations, and the available pools of high school students to observe and teach preschoolers were the basic similarities of these programs. The disadvantage of this concept was that many private preschools did not have funds to hire fulltime parent educators and there was a resistance of parents/parent substitutes to commit 90 minutes per week for 30 weeks toward improving the achievement of the children.

Several educators had designed programs to improve the behavior of children where the parents and the teachers worked together cooperatively. Based on his research, Thomas Lickona (1988) suggested using a step-by-step procedure of programs to improve the moral education of children. In Baltimore County, Maryland, a Values Education Task Force (1984) prepared a list of values which were agreeable between the school and the community.

Coleman's (1985) strategy recommended that school systems develop parent support groups to set school age children's curfews, reduce teen substance abuse and monitor children's viewing of television and movies.

The renowned Child Development Project in San Ramon, California used a variety of parental activities in moral education (Schaps, Solomon, & Watson, 1985). These activities included Family Fun Festivals and Family Fun Nights in which the parents and their children participated in activities or watched films with follow-up discussions of the social themes afterwards. Parents also learned to hold family meetings, design positive family communications, promote responsibility in their children, and integrate classroom value activities in the home. Nearly half of the participating families reported more positive family life. The comparison results of the three area elementary schools showed that these students' score superior on instruments measuring social-moral cognition and behavior.

In Upstate New York, the Scotia-Glenville Experience focused on moral development through the Family Curriculum Guide designed for classroom and home use ("Family", 1981). In September, 90 percent of the parents attended school on Back-to-School Night to receive the Family Guides. As a follow-up in November, 90 percent of the parents came for conferences to discuss the values program. Over 50 percent of the parents responded to the year-end-questionnaire with reports of regular use of the at-home materials.

All of the previous programs were deemed successful due to serious commitments and collaborative efforts between parents, community, and educators. All of them were targeted for elementary school populations except the Baltimore County program which included the entire district's population.

Inservice training had been validated as another way of assisting teachers in improving preschool programs. Ann Clewett (1988), an early childhood consultant, advised teachers to use preventive techniques to curtail discipline problems in the classrooms. Her recommendations included actively observing the children's behavior, intervening before misbehavior occurred and having ample materials and equipment available. These activities enabled the teacher to redirect the child to more positive new behaviors. Clewett advocated using discipline as a means of teaching rather than punishment. Her research found that using stories and puppets to teach discipline reduced verbal and physical aggression and promoted the use of thinking skills when the children chose alternative methods to aggression. She concluded that the best methods for reducing discipline problems were to read stories and teach the children to choose alternative positive behavior and activities.

The Clewett program used the classroom setting as the only method for encouraging positive behavior. The approach neglected to involve parents, leading to support of the assumption that schools can effectively teach children without parental support and interaction. Some educators still felt that parental involvement might hinder their teaching method, interfere with their classrooms, and demand too much time of the teachers and administrators (Henderson, 1988). Others were prone to assign parents to less than meaningful activities that frustrated, belittled and left them out of their child's educational program. In some school systems parents and teachers appeared to be in adverse positions as parents felt insecure when challenging or questioning teachers about class activities (Stephen & Wolf, 1988). With cooperative working relationships between parents and teachers there was effective reinforcement of home-school efforts ultimately benefiting the childrens' learning processes (Project Head Start, 1967).

In order to reinforce school teachings, parents as well as teachers had to be knowledgeable in the area of child growth and development. There were many media advertisements which claimed to teach pre- reading and math skills to preschoolers while neglecting to inform teachers and parents of the developmental levels for these children (Carr, 1988). There was an indication that preschoolers could be at risk when formal instruction was provided too early (Elkind, 1988, October). Inappropriate activities caused emotional and educational problems affecting the children's growth processes (Elkind, 1986). To reduce the "miseducation" of these children, parents and teachers needed to allow preschoolers to learn spontaneously through play in stimulating homes and classrooms (Elkind, 1988). Ideally, the teacher was responsible for providing age-appropriate activities in the learning environment. The teacher was also responsible for assisting parents in understanding how a child develops in relation to appropriate learning activities.

Educators needed to learn how to communicate effectively with parents so that productive parent training sessions occurred. It should be noted that some parents needed special attendance and child care arrangements (Hoemann, 1982). The single parent, parents of a handicapped child, migrant parents, middle class parents, and inexperienced parents usually had different attitudes about school, parental involvement, discipline techniques, play, learning, and the home and school responsibilities (Gefler & Perkins, 1987). With this understanding of parent and home situations, the teacher prepared for the parent-teacher conferences where he/she explained the children's homework, classwork and social performance (Hunter, 1983). At the same time parents were taught several strategies for skill reinforcment at home (Hunter, 1983). Time was provided to allow parents the opportunity to express concerns and develop strategies to help the children (Hoemann, 1982). As follow-up, the teacher documented the conferences and provided necessary subsequent assistance (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987).

The Elmwood Community School District cited the following strategies as successful in increasing parental involvement in school activities: (a) good grades continental breakfasts; (b) honor roll pancake and sausage breakfasts; (c) lunches for parents of upcoming freshmen; (d) parent advisory brunches; (e) fine art brunches; (f) National Honor Society induction luncheon; and (g) Back-to-School night entertainment (Mauer, 1985). Food and praise appeared to be essential ingredients in encouraging these parents to participate in school activities.

Of note, Madeline Hunter (1983), an educational consultant, advocated several kinds of activities for increasing parental involvement. She suggested the use of the telephone conferences, home visits, student programs, newsletters, classwork, an open door policy and parent meetings in order to foster more frequent and effective communications.

Generally, parent-teacher conferences were scheduled once or twice during a school year; overall, it was considered to be the most effective activity for linking the home and the school. The steps for planning these conferences were indeed beneficial in developing cooperative working relationships between parents of preschoolers and the teachers. In planning other activities it was found that assessing the interests of the parents promoted increased parental involvement. The Elmwood School District observed that food and praise activities were effective vehicles in bringing parents to the school.

Madeline Hunter (1983) advocated the teacher taking an active role in contacting parents on a personal basis. Since the activities reflected a strong commitment on the part of the teacher, her activities worked well in the preschool program.

In addition to learning how to relate to parents, teachers continued to update their teaching skills. The Ypsilanti Early Education Program trained teachers to use their Piaget-derived curriculum developed for the Perry Preschool Project (Edelman, 1987-88). The teacher was trained to present students with a situation and allow them to determine which skills to explore based on the children's reactions to the activity. The teacher's "diagnostic interpretation" of how the children were thinking was successful when the teacher was able to structure the environment without interfering with the children's thinking (Kamii, 1972). This spontaneous concept related to teaching the curriculum was reported to foster the children's readiness for learning later in formal school programs with a variety of subjects.

Toney, Johnson and Szporer (1988) outlined an instructional procedure used with preschoolers which was field-tested over the past 16 years in clinical and teacher education programs. The researchers advocated letting the childern tell two stories of interest daily beginning with one or two phrases or sentences while the teacher wrote them down. Then the teacher read the story, while pointing to the words so that all the children could see. The child telling the story repeated after the teacher as she read the story to the group. As the children drew pictures for their stories, the teacher wrote the stories on their papers. The stories were then collected in a book so each child could see how he/she develops his/her skills in story telling, language and reading readiness. To further develop these skills the teacher or assistant taped the stories in sequence with their books and allowed the children to read along with the tape. At least once a day each child listened to their stories, developing their phonics and relating them to the printed stories. After listening, the teacher or assistant chose two stories and allowed the child to point to a particular story. If the child was unable to identify a story, the teacher pointed to it to ensure a successful experience. As soon as the child could identify a story, he/she was allowed to learn to recognize of a phrase or sentence. Tally boards were kept to record and display their successes. When the children identified all the phrases or sentences, the teachers moved ahead. If not, the process was continued until success was achieved. The more advanced students were able to underline the phrases they wanted to learn while the teacher read to them. They began to process words within a sentence or story at a greater depth. The transitional step of this procedure allowed the children to recognize words, phrases or sentences which were used in the stories, but the stories were written by the teacher, assistant or parent. Throughout this procedure children looked at books of their interests. They learned to recognize words from their stories. The children often wanted to write their own stories; the desired objectives of the project were met. The professors reported that this procedure helped teachers view reading as language learning. Additionally, a language rich environment and the children's self-correcting strategies improved their chances of being able to read.

Description of Selected Solutions

The school's three preschool classes, a total of forty-four students, participated in the described problem solving activity for eight months. The enrollment included 13 two-year-olds, 13 three-year-olds, and 18 four-year-olds. Each of the classes for the two- and four-year-old children had one teacher and an assistant teacher. The class for the three-year-olds had only one teacher. There were approximately 80 parents. The Parent Involvement Coordinator, the Director, the teachers, the teacher assistants, the parents and community volunteers collaborated in planning parent and teacher education programs. The purpose was to promote quality preschool programming which effectively prepared these students for formal schooling. The team assessed the needs of the educators, parents and children. With the needs assessment results, an achievable plan was made to upgrade the skills of each involved group and the whole preschool program.

Community volunteers sponsored additional funds for supplies and materials. Fund raising efforts included recycling aluminum cans and newspapers. Some volunteers/sponsors donated materials, expertise and/or time. The basic school supplies, materials and the facility was provided by the school.

The writer's rationale for seeking a partnership between the home and school was based on research which indicated that the training of parents and teachers of disadvantaged preschoolers increased quality programming. When this was accomplished, student achievement and behavior was improved with lasting effects on their school experiences (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987). The results of the longitudinal High/Scope Education Foundation study indicated two major findings. The first finding, teacher education, enhanced the effectivenes of teachers. The second finding, parent education, helped the parents realize the importance of parental involvement and their influence upon their child's learning (Edelman, 1988).

The disadvantaged preschoolers who attended their Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan had fewer special education placements, fewer repeated grades, and lower incidences of juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy (Day, 1988). These students were also more likely to graduate from high school, attend post-secondary institutions, be self-supporting and enjoy working, as indicated by program results. The project was successful because it was built around sound research, strong commitments and training programs. The writer believed this parent-teacher education program significantly enhanced the teaching skills of both the parents and teachers. The overall results were reflected improvement of the quality of the preschool program as indicated by achievement and behavior evaluations for the preschoolers.

There was a commitment by all parties involved to create an educational partnership with parents, school personnel and volunteers (Satte, 1988). Thorough orientations (Decker & Decker, 1984) and training programs were needed to implement the program. When the participants indicated commitment, the second step was to provide them with orientation sessions that acquainted them with the program materials and ideas and an explanation their roles.

The third step was assessing the needs of the parents, teachers and the facility. Beaty (1984) created a self-assessment checklist for preschool teachers and aides. This list of skills was approved by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families and the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program. The basis of the checklist was the assumption that teacher determination of needs improved work efforts for achieving objectives.

The state of North Carolina used the same approach in its public school system in an effort to encourage job performance improvement and professional growth (Orange County Schools [OCS], 1985). From a list of eight major function areas that characterized an effective teacher, a teacher had to choose one to three goals from the functions in which to make improvements each year. The teachers were responsible for accomplishing chosen goals. The goals were used to write professional development plans.

Since some researchers were skeptical of data collected from self-assessments, the writer observed the teachers in their school setting in addition to using the self assessment instrument. A child care program evaluation instrument provided for parents by the local day council was used to record data. The information on the instrument was adopted from the Maryland Committee for Children Project and The Child Care Resource Center of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The checklist helped one to evaluate the quality of a child care program in three areas: (a) the relationship between the provider and the children; (b) the program; and (c) the physical aspects, health/nutrition and safety. In addition to the above, the brochure suggested that parents pay close attention to: (a) arrival and departure; (b) mealtime and snacks (c) indoor activities; (d) discipline; (e) consolation and comfort; (f) active group play; and (g) transition. Parents are encouraged to look at the children's faces to see if they are happy (McRary, 1988).

From the teachers' and the writer's assessments, an inservice training program was coordinated. In general, the workshop goals for the teachers included ideas for: (a) working with parents; (b) establishing an appropriate learning environment; (c) promoting safety practices; (d) encouraging good health; (e) providing motor development activities; (f) promoting cognitive skills; (g) communicating with children; (h) using art and music with children; (i) improving self-esteem; (j) providing social experiences; (k) providing guidance and counseling; (l) involving family in the children's educational experiences; (m) using a team approach to teaching; (n) working with volunteers; (o) planning age appropriate activities; (p) report writing; and (q) progress documentation.

In order to assess parent training needs and interests in participating in the program, the writer used a questionnaire with the possible topics for discussion. The questionnaire was based on topics suggested for parents by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Project PIN - Parent Involvement Now. Some of the topics included: (a) improving home-school communications; (b) the art of parenting programs which included improving discipline techniques, helping your child with math, pre-reading, art, science, music, motor skills; and (c) understanding the developmental levels. At this point, parents also volunteered to work on the Parent Involvement Planning Committee.

As the project continued the parents were asked to complete a parent report card in order to assess parental strengths and weaknesses. From this guide, improvement was provided. The brochure was adapted from a 1981 Title I parental brochure written by a curriculum specialist.

At the beginning of the implementation period, the fourth step, the skills and behavior assessment, took place. The observations by parents and teachers were determined by the students' levels of performance.

The fifth step in the practicum was involvement of parents in activities which could be performed at home to improve their child's achievement and behavior. The home-school communications portion of the problem solving activity involved sending home messages directed to parents through the children. The communicators included announcements, letters on parenting skills and notes concerning individual students. Weekly positive notes provided recognition to students for some noteworthy achievement in skills or behavior (Miller, 1988). A school newspaper contained plans, special events, a news page for the children (Beale, 1985) and recognitions for outstanding cooperation to teachers, parents and volunteers. Every three months, brief, friendly and positive telephone calls from the teachers, the director and the Parent Involvement Coordinator occurred (Berry & Glenn, 1985). Scheduled parent-teacher conferences occurred twice during the practicum period to discuss the students' skill assessment and later to discuss the improvements and/or reinforcements needed (Bricker & Casuso, 1979). Unscheduled conferences were also held when parents felt the need to discuss concerns with the teacher (Decker & Decker, 1984). During Open House parents visited the school, talked with school personnel and learned how to use the materials available at the school (Berry & Glenn, 1985). Small groups of parents were invited on a casual basis to discuss school needs, its problems, the curriculum and their concerns (Decker & Decker, 1984). Periodically the parents were asked to visit the classroom in the afternoon before they left the center in order to let their child show them the work he/she had done in class (Eliason, 1981). Weekly work taught in the classroom was sent home with the children to have their parents help reinforce the lessons (American Association of Administrator, 1985). These and other activities made parents aware of the school activities, and provided teachers with a vehicle for establishing a two-way system of communication (Berry & Glenn, 1985). Special events such as a May Day Celebration, a Science Fair, and a Food Fair were held to allow the children an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to their parents (Eliason,, 1981). A home lending library supplemented the regular classroom program by making available a variety of materials, both handmade and commercial, that complemented the instructional program and provided new areas of interest and learning (Wilkes County Schools).

The sixth step of the problem solving activity was the involvement of community volunteers. The writer conducted the parent and teacher training sessions. Parents and other volunteers from the community were asked to share their skills with the students in the classrooms. The high school students continued to provide assistance to the classroom teachers.

The seventh step was to provide on-going evaluation so the writer would know when to revise, change, improve, continue, or discontinue parts of the program (Glickman, 1985). Generally speaking, the evaluation determined if the quality of the preschoolers' education improved. Specifically, the evaluation determined whether or not: (a) the administrator provided the support and commitment needed to make the program effective; (b) the educators and parents utilized the knowledge acquired through training to improve their abilities in working with the preschoolers; (c) the teachers designed educational plans based on their evaluation of the preschoolers' needs and parental input; (d) the parents increased and improved their involvement in their preschooler's educational experience; (e) a curriculum enriched with volunteers, more effective teachers and parents, and home-school activities improved the achievement and behavior of the preschoolers; and (f) the problem solving activity had a positive effect on the preschoolers, the parents and the teachers.

Report of Action Taken

MONTH 1

Week 1: Orientation: Teachers

Week 2: Importance of Parent Involvement and the Purposes of Parent Education: PTA

Week 4: Age Appropriate Activities and Effective Discipline Techniques for Preschoolers: Parents

MONTH 2

Week 2: Reading Readiness and Preschoolers: PTA

MONTH 3

Week 2: Using Numbers with Preschoolers: PTA

Week 4: Observing and Recording Student Progress: Teachers

MONTH 4

Week 2: Writing and the Preschoolers: PTA

Week 4: Effective Discipline Techniques: Teachers

- A. Preventing Misbehavior
  1. Planning Ahead
  2. Setting Clear Expectations

MONTH 5

Week 2: Science and the Preschoolers: PTA

Week 3: Effective Discipline Techniques: Teachers

- A. Preventing Misbehavior
  3. Helping Children Become More Independent
  4. Importance of Following a Routine Schedule

Week 4: Room Arrangement: Teachers

1. How Room Arrangement Affects the Behavior of Preschoolers
2. Placing Science Activities in the Room
3. Improving the Book Area

MONTH 6

Week 1: Effective Discipline Techniques: Teachers
    A. Preventing Misbehavior
        1. Calm Discipline
Week 2: Art and Music for Preschoolers: PTA
Week 3: Using Numbers with Preschoolers: Teachers

MONTH 7

Week 2: Developing Language Skills: PTA
Week 4: Writing and the Preschoolers: Teachers

MONTH 8

Week 2: Reducing Stress for Preschoolers: PTA

CHAPTER V

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

Results

Objective one, the improvement of student achievement, was measured by observation and teacher progress notes. On a weekly basis for three months, the teachers recorded statements about the achievement progress of the students on positive sheets (Appendix E). Each day of the week, the teachers wrote one statement on the positive sheets for three or four students that they observed accomplishing or improving new tasks. On Friday the positive notes were shared with the parents. For the remainder of the problem solving activity, the teachers recorded the children's significant achievement progress, (Eliason & Jenkins, 1981) which occurred in the learning environment, on the progress report form (See Appendix F). The parents received the reports at the end of the week and returned them at the beginning of the next week with comments. Upon return, the reports were filed in the students' folders. The collection of positive notes and progress reports indicated that all of the children had improved their achievement over the practicum implementation period. Therefore, objective one was met.

In order to accomplish this goal, the teachers attended a training session on observing and recording students' progress (Appendix G). The goal of the training was to provide the teachers with practice for observing and recording the children's motor, cognitive, social, emotional and language development (Bergstrom & Margosian, 1977). Event-sampling was preferred over time-sampling as the observation technique and anecdotal records were preferred over achievement records (Eliason & Jenkins, 1981). A checklist of skills (Beaty, 1984), common to the age groups, was used to assist the teachers in observing and recording the preschoolers' performances.

Observing the children and recording their progress on the form made the teachers more aware of the individual differences and special needs of the students. Before the end of practicum experience, the teachers were able to diagnose the difficulties that were preventing the children from mastering certain skills or concepts (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). By using the age appropriate skills checklist, the teachers improved their skills in assessing student performance by observation.

This led the way for more diagnostic teaching. The teachers were able to plan activities based on the special needs of individual students. These reports also provided an opportunity for the parents to aid in the development of their children's skills. The teachers were able to suggest ways that the parents could help the children reinforce what was learned in school. Specific skills were selected and assignments were designed for completion at home.

The parents enjoyed receiving the positive sheets and progress notes. During weeks with less than five working days, or when the children were rehearsing for a performance, the teachers did not prepare positive notes or progress reports. The parents had become accustomed to the written feedback and requested it when it was not presented to them.

As a result of the positive notes and progress reports, the amount of positive reinforcement received from teachers and parents increased for the preschoolers. These notes also helped to build the children's self confidence in learning which aided in the improvement of their achievement.

Objective two, the improvement of student behavior, was measured by the observation of effective discipline techniques and by the elimination of corporal punishment. After the first three months of the problem solving activity, the writer and the teachers recognized a noticable improvement in their discipline techniques. Corporal punishment was eliminated. The teachers did not record or report any observation of spanking at school once the problem solving activity began. Neither did the parents nor the writer witness any corporal punishment taking place at the school during the practicum implementation period. The objective was met.

Calm discipline was the technique that teachers noted as being most helpful to them. They came to realize that their reactions to problems affected the behavior of the children. Remaining calm instead of getting upset was beneficial for the teachers and the children (Morgan, 1984). Discipline took on a positive context and served as "prevention rather than punishment" (Small, 1989).

The writer observed that the teachers improved their discipline techniques mainly in the area of redirecting the children to alternative activities, instead of sending them to time out (Clewett, 1988). Due to the teachers' change in attitude about discipline and the improvement of the children's behavior, time out was used less often. The teachers talked to the children more often and allowed more time for the children to express themselves (Bullock, 1988). They tried to help the children understand that the teachers' job was to help them rather than punish them (Clewett, 1988). This gave the children a different perspective and they seemed to appreciate the assistance they were given rather than resent it.

Objective three, the improvement of teacher and parent knowledge of effective discipline techniques, was measured by a test (See Appendix B) administered following the completion of the effective discipline training sessions (See Appendices H and I). The test and the training sessions were based on reference materials from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. All of the participants were to choose the most appropriate answers to statements relating to the discipline of preschool children, achieving at least 70 percent accuracy.

A pretest was used to assess the parents' and teachers' basic knowledge of discipline techniques for this age group. Over 60 percent of the participants scored 70 or above (See Table 1).

Table 1

Effective Discipline Techniques Pretest Results

	AVERAGE SCORE	PERCENTAGE SCORE 70% OR ABOVE
PARENTS	69	58
TEACHERS	68	60

The scores for the post test were significantly higher. The average score for the teachers was 82 and the average score for the parents was 76. These scores increased by fourteen points for the teachers and seven points for the parents. All of the teachers (100 percent) were able to meet the criteria of the objective, whereas, only 92 percent of the parents scored 70 or above.

Several factors contributed to the teachers scoring higher than the parents. The teachers' effective discipline training program was more comprehensive and extended through the practicum implementation period. The teachers viewed a video tape, read reference materials (See Appendix J) and periodically discussed ways of managing their students' behavior with the writer. The post test was not administered until the end of the practicum experience for the teachers, whereas, the parents took the post test after a three hour session.

During months four, five and six, discipline training sessions were held to assist the teachers in using preventive measures to help the children become more self-disciplined. The teachers were encouraged to plan their activities and gather the materials early in the morning before the children arrived (Stone, 1969) or during the children's rest period. Prior planning minimized misbehavior due to restlessness and boredom during poor transitions.

Setting clear expectations was another preventive method covered in the training. Teachers were taught that rules should be set and taught to the children for specific activities. These included behavior toward classroom visitors, storage of personal belongings, sharing or taking turns, using the bathroom, activities that require permission and those that do not, and behaviors permissable during rest periods for those children who do not need or want to rest (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). It was explained that rules should be held at a minimum and created only when they were necessary (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975). For instance, it was unnecessary for a teacher to boisterously reprimand children or disallow them to talk among themselves or to a classroom visitor as they sat waiting over an extended period of time without guidance from the teacher. The children needed the freedom to talk to each other, talk to other adults, or at least be given instructions as to what was permissable. This showed a lack of clear expectations for the children and the classroom visitor. This type of discipline technique confused the children and stifled the development of language skills. The teacher was probably tired from working nine hours a day at the school and four hours at night and wanted peace and quiet. While it was easier to yell and scream to immediately stop a behavior, it lowers children's self esteem and makes life more difficult for everyone in the long run. A thoughtful, patient, intelligent approach yielded better long term results for the teachers and the children (Small, 1989).

The training also included ways to help the children become more independent and responsible. Using the children as assistants to prepare for lunch or the rest period was valuable for training them in self reliance. Not only was it helpful for the children, it was beneficial to the teachers, especially the one without a teacher assistant. Materials and supplies were placed where children could utilize them without having to ask the teacher. The children enjoyed acting as adults and were thrilled at their accomplishments (Honig, 1987). All of the materials and supplies had previously been passed out by the teachers. For instance, when the children colored pictures they were each given a broken piece of crayon that was the same color. Before the training, the children were very seldom given choices.

Following the routine schedule was another component covered in the preventive measures training. The disruptions that the teacher encountered during devotion were a result of her not having permitted the children to use the bathroom during the scheduled time period. Some of the children interrupted the lesson to use the bathroom and others misbehaved as they waited for their classmates to return.

Becoming a calm disciplinarian was the last of the series in the teacher effective discipline techniques training. The teachers were encouraged not to scream at the children, but to show respect for them by speaking calmly. They were taught that being a positive role model caused the children to be more cooperative (Stone, 1969).

The parents' training was similar. They were also interested in learning ways to discipline their preschoolers without becoming upset. They had the opportunity to practice changing their voice tones and making negative disciplinary statements positive. They were encouraged to discipline without anger (Morgan, 1984).

The parents were especially interested in learning ways to deal with lying, stealing and aggressive behavior. A lengthy discussion was held on the practice of biting the child who bites others. It was concluded that biting was wrong and it should not be tolerated. The parents decided that the most acceptable disciplinary technique was soothing the child or person who was bitten and then explaining, to the child who did the biting, how inappropriate it was and directing him/her to another activity (Stone, 1969). Redirecting a child to an alternative behavior was preferred, over isolation, by many early childhood specialists.

Since over half of the parents assessed chose isolation or spanking for preschoolers as acceptable approaches to discipline (See Table 2), an extended period was used for discussion and reading material was made available (See Appendix K). Like many parents from disadvantaged backgrounds, physical punishment and isolation was a normal way of life (Brophy, Good & Nedler, 1975). However, it was stressed during the workshop for parents to choose more effective means such as restraining the child by holding him/her or directing the child to an alternative activity.

Isolation should be used sparingly (Clewett, 1988). Unfortunately the majority of the parents left the workshop still believing that spanking and isolation were the best methods to use when disciplining their preschoolers. Shaking was probably not chosen as an acceptable discipline method because a parent in the local area had previously been convicted for shaking a child to death. They recognized shaking as physically damaging but could not relate to spanking and isolation as being emotionally damaging.

Table 2

Effective Discipline Techniques Pre/Posttest Results

Item 7. Choose an acceptable approach to discipline.

	Percentages			
	Spanking	Isolation	Shaking	Holding
Pretest	31	46	0	23
Posttest	31	46	0	23

Fortunately, most of them agreed, after the training, that the time spent in time out should be limited (Clewett, 1988) (See Table 3). Before the training, their attitude was more authoritarian rather than that of teaching self-discipline. Once they understood the definition of discipline, they related to the children spending a shorter period in time out. They did not associate time out with isolation.

Table 3

Effective Discipline Techniques Discipline Pre/Posttest

Item 6. Time out should be used for

Percentages

	As many minutes as the child is old.	As long as the parent or teacher deems necessary.	5-7 min.	8-10 min.
Pretest	17	33	0	50
Post test	83	17	0	0

Objective four, the evaluation of the teachers' and parents' knowledge of age appropriate activities, was measured by a test score of 70 percent or above.

As in objective three, 100 percent of the teachers excelled on the test. All of the teachers scored 70 percent or above on the age appropriate activities test after their training. The average score was 80. This was an increase of 28 points. Only 77 percent of the parents scored 70 percent or above. The average score was 72. This was an increase of 25 points.

Objective four was met by all of the teachers (100 percent) but 23 percent of the parents scored below 70 percent on the age appropriate activities for preschoolers test.

It was reasonable to assume that the teachers would score higher on the age appropriate activities test simply because they had some training and experience in teaching preschoolers. In addition to the above, the teachers did not take the post test until the end of the practicum experience, whereas, the parents took the test after the three hour session.

On the pretest, all of the teachers knew that play was the most effective way for preschoolers to learn, but most of the parents either did not know that children learned through play or they neglected to choose an answer (See Table 4). However, by the end of the three hour training session on age appropriate activities the parents understood play to be the most recommended method for teaching preschoolers (See Appendix L). The training included the viewing of the NEAYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Birth through Age 5* videotape, discussions, role-playing, and looking at a display of learning materials. The training session ended with a make and take session.

Table 4

Age Appropriate Activities Pre/Post Test Results

Item 1. Children learn most effectively through:

Percentages

	Highly Structured Activities	Rote Memory	Play	Teacher-Directed Activities	No Answer
Pretest	23	8	38	0	31
Postest	0	0	100	0	0

The following mini sessions on age appropriate activities for preschoolers were held during PTA meetings: (a) The Importance of Parent Involvement and the Purposes of Parent Education; (b) Reading

Readiness; (c) Numbers; (d) Writing; (e) Science; (f) Art and Music; (g) Language and ; (h) Reducing Stress.

The Importance of Parent Involvement and the Purposes of Parent Education session (See Appendix M) laid the foundation for the practicum experience. The relationship of parental involvement to a preschooler's achievement was explained. A parent was described as the child's first and most effective teacher. Upon the child's enrollment into preschool, an effective parent developed a cooperative working relationship with the preschool teacher to assist the child in functioning successfully (NEA, "Parents/Teachers: Together We Teach Your Child"). The brochure, "Parents/Teachers: Together We Teach Your Child", was reviewed. A handout described the Purposes of Parent Education and presented the advantages to the children as well as the parents. After the session, each parent and teacher was given the opportunity to write what he/she wanted to learn from the following sessions (See Table 5). The basic rights of children and pertinent articles stressing the importance of parental involvement in the educative process was distributed to the parents.

As a result of this session, over 50 percent of the parents attending the PTA registered to attend the age appropriate activities and effective discipline techniques weekend training sessions.

In the second month the Reading Readiness session was held (See Appendix N). The following brochures, printed by the International Reading Association, were distributed: (a) "Your Home is Your Child's First School"; (b)"You Can Encourage Your Child to Read"; and (c)"Good Books Make Reading Fun for Your Child". The second brochure described the role of the parent and suggested activities that would assist their children in developing the following skills: (a) physical; (b) intellectural; (c) speech and language; (d) listening; (e) visual; and (f) social and emotional. To develop reading readiness skills the parents were encouraged to (a) schedule reading times with their children, (b) be good listeners; (c) purchase books, or (d) check them out at the library. Literary selections included (a) nursery rhymes, word plays and rhymes for two- and three-year-olds, and (b) stories of fantasy and real life for three- and four-year-olds. The "You Can Encourage Your Child to Read" brochure presented the factors that influence reading interest and suggestions for stimulating interest. It advocated having books and magazines available to children. Issues of Sesame Street Magazine, a Fire Fly Book Club catalog, and bibliographies of books appropriate for preschoolers, were on display for the parents to view. "The Good Books Make Reading Fun for Your Child" brochure described how to choose books appropriate for preschoolers and questions, if any, to ask about stories.

The third training session involved using numbers with preschoolers (See Appendix O). The NAEYC (1987) brochure, "More than 1,2,3-The Real Basics of Mathematics", was distributed to parents and teachers. The participants were shown how "personal experiences" and "playful activities" assisted children in thinking mathematically. The parents and teachers were encouraged to talk to the children about time, length, weight, addresses, telephone numbers, cooking, measuring, temperature, ordering, household chores, money management and shopping to promote a basis in math. Letting preschoolers pay for small purchases in cash to learn how money is used to acquire goods (State Employee's Credit Union, October, 1988) and allowing them to play with different kinds of coins to distinguish different denominations of money were two math-related activities suggested. The NEAYC also advocated the use of games, dramatic plays, fingerplays, poems, stories, puzzles, and blocks to assist children in developing mathematical concepts.

A more comprehensive training for teachers in the use of numbers with preschoolers was held in month six (See Appendix P). The primary goal was to inform

Table 5

The Most Common Parent Responses

Question: What would you like to learn in your parent education sessions?

I would like to learn:

how to teach my child in all areas.

how to control my child's temper.

how to prevent my child from using psychology on me.

how to be more patient with my child.

how to help my child learn more.

how to talk to my child on his level.

how to keep the kids from being bored on the weekends.

more about the school and what my child is learning.

better discipline techniques.

methods of teaching at home.

how to solve sibling jealousy.

about the types of extra curricular activities that will reduce my child's hyperactivity.

how to discipline effectively without spanking.

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teachers that math concepts were not taught directly, but the teacher's role was to encourage children to think about numbers as they related to them (Kamii, 1982). In the number centers, activities appropriate for each age level were available. To manage behavior in the centers, one teacher used numbers to let the children know how many of them could play in that station at a time. Other instances where number development was enhanced in school involved distributing materials, dividing objects, collecting things, keeping attendance records, cleaning up, voting and playing various games (Kamii, 1982). A copy of Number in Preschool and Kindergarten (1987) was made available to the teachers.

In the fourth month, the mini training on writing was held at the PTA meeting (See Appendix Q). Parents were familiarized with the developmental writing process of preschoolers and were shown how their values concerning writing were passed on to their children. The article, "I Kan Rite: The joys of writing begins with scribbling", from the Sesame Street Magazine Parent Guide, was shared with the parents. It suggested that parents listen to the children describe their scribbling and label the work for them. This provided children with symbols for their scribbling. Parents were encouraged to create writing and drawing centers at home to foster writing experiences.

In the seventh month, the teacher training on writing centered around distinguishing between scribbling and drawing (See Appendix R). Teachers were shown the difference between children's writing and drawing. The most important thing a teacher could do to support the children's writing was to provide materials (Schickedanz, 1986), answer questions and respond with interest and enthusiasm to their writings. Writing centers with paper, crayons, preschool pencils and markers were set up in each classroom. Periodically, special materials and activities were put in the writing center. On special occasions, materials were provided so they could create cards.

In the fifth month, a mini session on Science and the Preschooler was held at the PTA metting (See Appendix S). "Family Sharing Pages" (Scholastic Pre-K Today, 1988) entitled "Learning Through Nature" and "Water Play is Learning" were distributed to parents. Activities which enhanced the children's science skills were included on the sheets.

In the sixth month, art and music were the focus of the training (See Appendix T). Parents were urged to expose their children to art and music because it expands their capacity to enjoy and appreciate life (Parents can teach children to love concerts, museum visits, 1988). The home was seen as the most important factor in cultivating a child's interest in art and music. When music was frequently played at home and drawing was promoted, the children developed a natural appreciation for it (Parents can teach children to love concerts and museum visits, 1988).

In the seventh month, a training session on developing language skills was held (See Appendix U). The goal of this training session was to inform teachers and parents that literacy learning progresses naturally in an environment making it playful, interesting, useful and fun (Schickedanz, 1986). Parents and teachers were reminded that oral language develops best when we talk to children, and written language develops best when children are allowed to practice scribbling. At home and at school, the environment should be rich in print. This included using labels, signs, charts, lists, money, magazines, maps, containers games, puzzles, cookbooks, recipe cards, alphabet materials, books, sound materials, word-making materials, book corners, writing centers and writing suitcases (Schickedanz, 1986). The children should be allowed to assist the teacher or parent in making the signs, labels, etc. It gave the new items a sense of meaning to the children. Several suggestions were shared to promote literacy development without formal lessons. One of the teachers designed a daily schedule chart to remind the children of their routines and another teacher used a helper's chart to promote more independence. The children helped by decorating the charts.

In the eighth month, the focus of the mini training was on reducing stress for the preschoolers (Appendix V). Stress was defined as "a nonspecific response of the body to any demand that exceeds the person's ability to cope" (McCracken, 1986). The first step used to help children reduce the stress in their lives was to use observation skills to recognize the signs of stress. A list of stress causing factors was distributed. It was explained that sometimes adults expect children to adapt to the adult world rather than us adapting to the children's needs and interests (Elkind, 1982). Honig (1987) suggested that parents and teachers; (a) observe the behavior of the children; (b) demonstrate self-control; (c) enhance children's self-esteem; (d) use preventive measures; (e) be humorous; (f) use art; (g) use role playing of coping skills; (h) have talks; and (i) structure the environment to enhance cooperation (McCracken, 1986). It was suggested that teachers teach relaxation exercises and provide breaks throuhout the day to practice the activities and behaviors(Jones & Jones, 1983). Such exercises gave children self control over their feeling, thinking, acting and learning (Jones and Jones, 1983). Articles about reducing stress for children were placed in the home-school library for reading (Appendix W).

The unanticipated outcome was the increase in numbers at the PTA meetings and the weekend training sessions. The previous school year, the number of parents attending the meetings had decreased. This year, more parents attended on a more consistent basis. The meetings were seen as a time for sharing common concerns rather than a forum for raising money.

Objective five, the teachers' knowledge of planning age appropriate activities, was evaluated by the review of daily lesson plans and observation.

By the end of the practicum experience, the teachers wrote daily lesson plans. The lesson plans included activities appropriate for the age levels and were based on the state curriculum (See Appendix X). The writer observed an increase of planning individualized activities for particular students, for small groups and/or for all of the children. This objective was met.

The positive notes and progress reports enhanced the teachers' diagnostic planning. They were able to plan individualized or special group activities based upon information recorded on the reports. Before the practicum experience, they taught the same thing to all the children. During the implementation period, diagnostic teaching and observation skills improved.

As a matter of fact, the improvement of their observation skills led them to realize that they did indeed need to evaluate their learning environment. They discovered that their room arrangements were not conducive to individualized and small group activities. They used a field-tested checklist to evaluate their physical space (Beaty, 1984), and a room arrangement kit (Danoff, Breitbart & Barr, 1977) to try out some of their new ideas or ideas they gained from their room arrangement training (See Appendix Y) as well as from reading materials (See Appendix Z).

They soon came to realize that their room arrangements affected the behavior of their children. According to Danoff, Breitbart and Barr (1984) a good room arrangement; (a) promoted the developmemt of initiative and independence; (b) allowed choices; (c) allowed the teacher to enter play at teachable moments; (d) allowed movement from one activity to another; and (e) promoted more self-initiated activities rather than teacher-oriented instruction.

To minimize behavior problems in the new arrangements, the teachers used a system of movement plan suggested by Beaty (1984). The children were taught to regulate themselves by looking at the signs in each center. Numbers, animals and various objects or figures were placed in each center to give the children cues as to the number of students allowed in a particular center at a time. After setting expectations, the teachers observed the children to identify those needing additional guidance in learning the system. Appropriate strategies were used to help those children develop the necessary skills for efficient movement within the centers. This procedure relieved some of the stress for teachers who were reluctant to use the centers frequently because of misbehavior.

The increased use of the learning centers led to the development of new and better centers. Science centers were created and the reading centers were improved. To increase the number of new books for the centers and to develop the teachers' skills in lesson planning, a book along with a lesson plan was added to the home-school library each week (See Appendix AA). Old books were removed. As often as possible, the lessons fostered positive self-concepts and/or taught self control. Reading aloud was encouraged every day because it helped children derive meaning and pleasure from print (Richardson, 1988).

The book, Rocks and Minerals (1985), and a poem were placed in one of the special science centers. The items below, suggested by Besse-Gene Holt (1977), were donated for the centers. They included magnets, aquarium, fish net, goldfish and supplies, a picture of a goldfish, a story about goldfish, pictures of flowers, a mirror, rocks, sea shells, seeds, whole grains, posters, charts, potting soil, cups, games, lesson plans, rulers, plastic containers and drawing paper. Group projects included taking care of the gold fish, and planting tomato and grass seeds. The children watched the growth of the plants from the seeds. They were excited about their plants and told others about them. Many of the science materials were placed in other centers to give children the opportunity to explore and experience scientific learning and discovery on their own (Scholastic Pre-K Today, April, 1989). For example, extra sea shells were used in the art and language centers.

With new room arrangements, bulletin boards, displays and students' work the classrooms came alive for learning. The teachers wrote lesson plans on a weekly basis and routinely posted them in the classrooms by the end of the problem solving activity.

Part of the accomplishment for this goal was attributed to a state consultant's suggestion; the state required that teachers post lesson plans. The teachers were not accustomed to posting their lesson plans and when questioned about this at the beginning of the practicum, one teacher repied, "No one makes us". Attitudes like this made the school less than ideal for parental involvement and the improvement of the preschoolers' achievement. Even after the instructions from the consultant were provided, the same teacher used correction fluid to change the date each week instead of making new plans. As part of the licensure process, the plans had to be posted. Since the teachers wanted the school to become licensed and they were unsure of the time for the unannounced visit they posted their plans regularly.

Objective six, the increase of the frequency of communications between the preschoolers' parents and teachers was measured by the number of parent and teacher communications recorded by the teachers on a weekly tally during the practicum period. The report form (See Appendix D) specified the type of contact which occurred and the initiator of the contact.

The parent and teacher communications increased by 50 percent for the teachers of the two- and three-year-olds and continued on a 100 percent basis for the teacher on the four-year-olds.

The records indicated that the communications increased by 50 percent. For the first three months, teachers sent home positive notes and progress reports. By the end of the practicum experience, the communications increased to twice a week with classroom visits.

Throughout the practicum experience, the teacher for the four-year-olds continued to provide parents with progress reports on a weekly basis. These parents had the opportunity to discuss their children's progress both orally and verbally, and they were aware of what was being taught at school and ways to reinforce it at home. Parent-teacher conferences were held when all of the teachers began using the progress report form. The second conferences were held during the last month of the problem solving activity. The teachers for the two- and three-year-olds increased their number of written communications by using the weekly positive notes and progress reports. The report and a general lesson plan naming the next week's color, rhyme and number were put in each folder given to parents on Friday to be returned on Monday. By the fifth month, the verbal communications increased because Wednesday was designated as classroom visit day. The parents viewed the children's work and checked out materials from the home-school library.

The activities promoted more verbal interaction initiated by parents.

Communication by phone and by home visits was unrealistic for this group of teachers. All of them had part time jobs which limited their time for making telephone calls to parents. One did not have transportation and another did not have a telephone.

The unexpected outcome was that the parents who assisted in planning the training sessions were the parents who interacted with teachers on a consistent basis about their children. Their patterns ranged from weekly to bi-weekly depending upon the parents.

Conclusions

It was natural for the children to show an improvement in their achievement over an eight month period, but it was the parent and teacher education program that improved the quality of education the preschoolers received. The training sessions helped the parents and teachers improve their educative roles. For instance, in objective one, the teachers acquired new skills. They (a) observed the children's strengths and weaknesses; (b) planned and implemented strategies that guided the development of the children; (c) recorded and shared the children's progress; and (d) worked cooperatively with the parents to accomplish the objectives. One objective which they worked on together was to provide each preschooler with positive reinforcers daily. This resulted in the building of each child's self-confidence for learning.

From objective two, the children's behavior improved as a result of the effective discipline training that teachers received. The teachers became calm disciplinarians who directed misbehaving children to alternative activities rather than punishment. The children spent less time in time out, had better relationships with the teachers, were freer to move around in the rooms, talked more with adults, and were not victims of corporal punishment.

From objective three, the parent and teacher training gave them preventive methods to help the children become self-disciplined. The teachers practiced planning to improve transitions, and setting clear expectations before activities to prevent misbehavior. Subsequently, the children became more independent and responsible. The effective discipline techniques test results for the parents indicated that they did not benefit as much as the teachers did from their training. Three fourths of the parents chose isolation and spanking over holding as acceptable approaches to discipline on the pre- and post test. On another item, over 15 percent felt it was acceptable to leave a child in time out for as long as the parent or teacher deemed necessary, even after the training. Evidently, some parents believed that punishment was necessary and refused to change their way of thinking.

However, in objective four, the age appropriate skills training sessions offered the parents and teachers a variety of new skills. The parents and teachers developed and improved their teaching skills, created and improved school and home learning environments, and planned age appropriate activities. Before the training, most of the parents did not believe that their children should be introduced to science. They had no concept of preparing the child for science just as you would for reading or language readiness skills.

Teacher training for planning age appropriate activities, through objective five, improved the teachers' competencies in teaching. Plans were based on the individual and group needs of the students. Planning became more child-centered and less teacher-oriented. The centers improved and were used more often. The children learned to use the system of management and could move around freely in the centers.

The results of the problem solving activity supported the belief that a parent and teacher education program based on the participants' needs can indeed improve the achievement and behavior of preschoolers. If all preschoolers received this much support, they would probably be more prepared for kindergarten.

Recommendations

The writer has seven specific recommendations based on the events of the practicum. The school needs to;

1) increase the wages and provide benefits for the teachers;

2) increase the ratio of staff to children;

3) purchase new supplies, materials and equipment;

4) require a higher standard of performance by all of the staff;

5) establish a planning period for each teacher;

6) create a parent advisory council; and

7) continue the parent/teacher education program.

The quality of education was fair at best, in a preschool where the wages, staff, supplies, materials, equipment, expectations and parent involvement are low. More support was definitely needed.

Dissemination

The first presentation of the results of this practicum project was shared with the director and the teachers. The second presentation is planned for the superintendent of the school system in which the writer is employed. He is in the process of planning a preschool program in the near future. The third presentation is scheduled for the local Phi Delta Kappa Chapter meeting. The writer also plans to submit articles relating to the problem solving activity to the *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Parent/Teacher education sessions have been scheduled in the writer's hometown and local school systems.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Parent Involvement Program Questionnaire

Parents and teachers must work together for children to reap the maximum benefits from their school experiences. Research has proven that when parents work closely with teachers the children improve their achievement.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess whether or not you are interested in becoming more involved in helping your child obtain his/her optimum development.

Please answer the following questions.

1. Are you interested in finding out how you and the teacher can work together to further the development of your child?
Yes______ No______

2. Are you interested in learning which activities are appropriate for your child's age level?
Yes______ No______

3. Would you like to learn how to help your child improve his/her skills in the following areas?
Yes______ No______ Math
Yes______ No______ Science
Yes______ No______ Language
Yes______ No______ Music
Yes______ No______ Art
Yes______ No______ Health
Yes______ No______ Physical Development
Yes______ No______ Interpersonal Skills
Yes______ No______ Reading Readiness

4. Are you interested in learning how to reduce stress for your child?
Yes______ No______

5. Are you interested in learning how to make materials that are helpful to your child's development?
Yes______ No______

6. Are you interested in learning more effective discipline methods?
Yes______ No______

7. Are you interested in working on a parent involvement planning committee?
Yes______ No______

Name________________________________Phone#________________

APPENDIX B

Effective Discipline Techniques Test

Directions: For each statement, circle the letter with the correct answer.

1. Good discipline is (a) punishment (b) enforcing rules (c) helping children to become self-disciplined (d) making the children behave.
2. Children who have problems often feel more peaceful after (a) working with clay, water or sand (b) active play (c) scolding (d) spanking.
3. Children become cooperative as a result of (a) teasing (b) caring with fair and steady rules (c) threats (d) shaming.
4. Adults can use the following as tools for maintaining control and keeping a lot of problems from happening (a) loud screaming (b) physical force (c) shaming (d) interesting, fun, and age-appropriate activities.
5. If a child spits, hits, kicks, scratches, attacks or bits, you should (a) scold him (b) spank him (c) stop the child and tell him why the behavior is inappropriate (d) bite him.
6. Time out should be used for (a) as many minutes as the child is old (b) five to seven minutes (c) eight to ten minutes (d) as long as the teacher/parent deems necessary.

7. This is an acceptable approach to discipline (a) spanking (b) isolation (c) shaking (d) holding quietly.
8. Rather than removing the child from the learning environment for misbehaving, we should (a) initiate some alternative behavior (b) make him put his head on the table (c) write his name on the board (d) smile at him.
9. Democratic teachers/parents increase the likelihood of (a) cooperation (b) aggression (c) dependence (d) good behavior.
10. Children will respect their teacher if the teacher (a) ridicules them (b) makes strict rules (c) helps them to have a positive self-concept.

APPENDIX C

AGE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS FOR PRESCHOOLERS TEST

DIRECTIONS: For each statement, circle the letter with the correct answer.

1. Children learn most effectively through (a) highly structured activities (b) rote memory (c) play (d) teacher-directed activities.
2. This age child learns to produce language rapidly (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
3. This age group needs simple books, pictures, puzzles and music (a) three-year-olds (b) two-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
4. Dramatic play, wheel toys and climbers, puzzles and blocks, and opportunities to talk and listen to simple stories are appropriate activities for (a) three-year-olds (b) two-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
5. This age group develops basic math concepts and problem solving skills (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
6. This age group is more able to concentrate and remember as well as recognize objects by shape, color, or size (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds

7. This age group enjoys a greater variety of experiences and more small motor activities like scissors, art, manipulatives and cooking (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
8. This age group is more able to concentrate and remember as well as recognize objects by shape, color, or size (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds
9. This age group does not usually understand or remember rules therefore guidance in real situations and repeated demonstrations are more likely to impress them (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds.
10. This group needs time for active play such as jumping, running and dancing (a) two-year-olds (b) three-year-olds (c) four-year-olds

From Bredekamp, S. (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Educations of Young Children.

APPENDIX D

PARENT-TEACHER CONTACTS
WEEKLY FORM

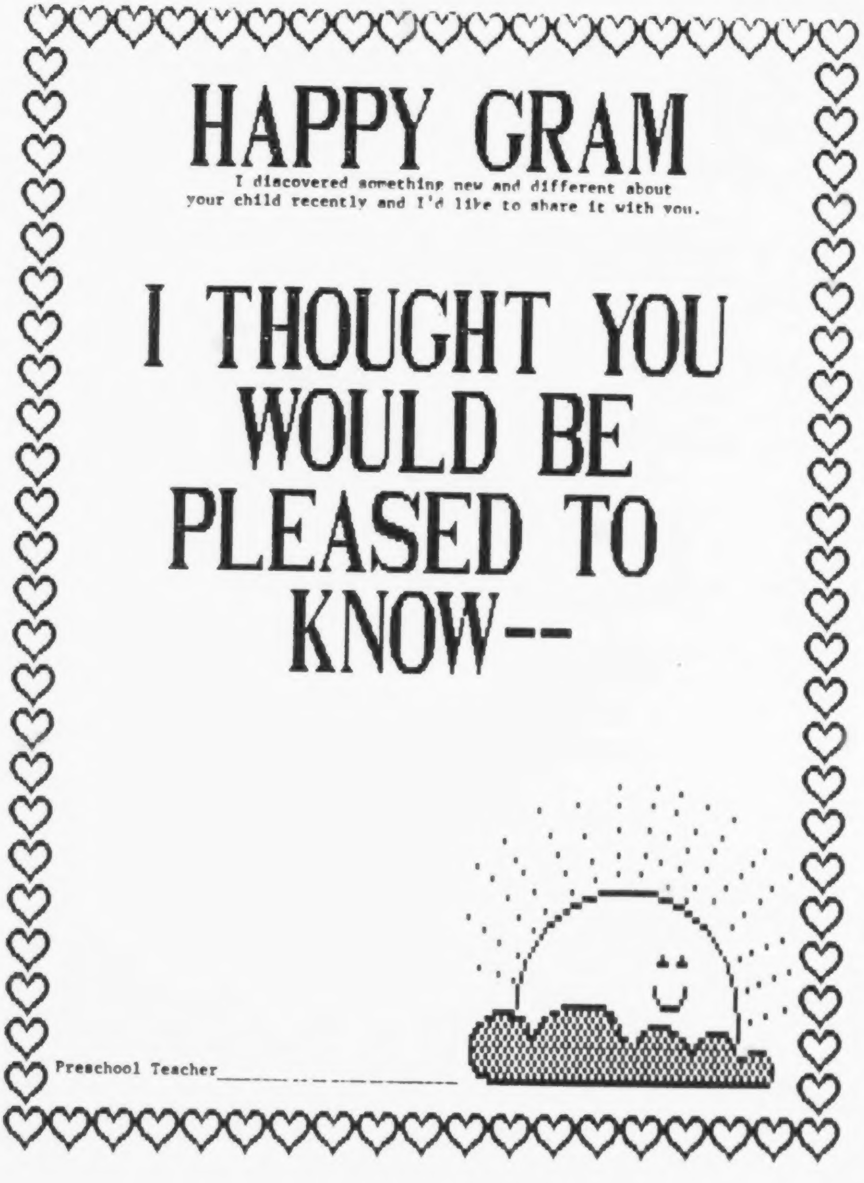
PARENT-TEACHER CONTACTS
WEEKLY FORM

Student's Name	Who Init.	Conf.	Reason	Notes	Calls	Class	Home	Other

APPENDIX E

POSITIVE SHEETS

Sample Positive Sheet



HAPPY GRAM

I discovered something new and different about your child recently and I'd like to share it with you.

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE PLEASED TO KNOW--

Preschool Teacher____________________

Sample Positive Sheet

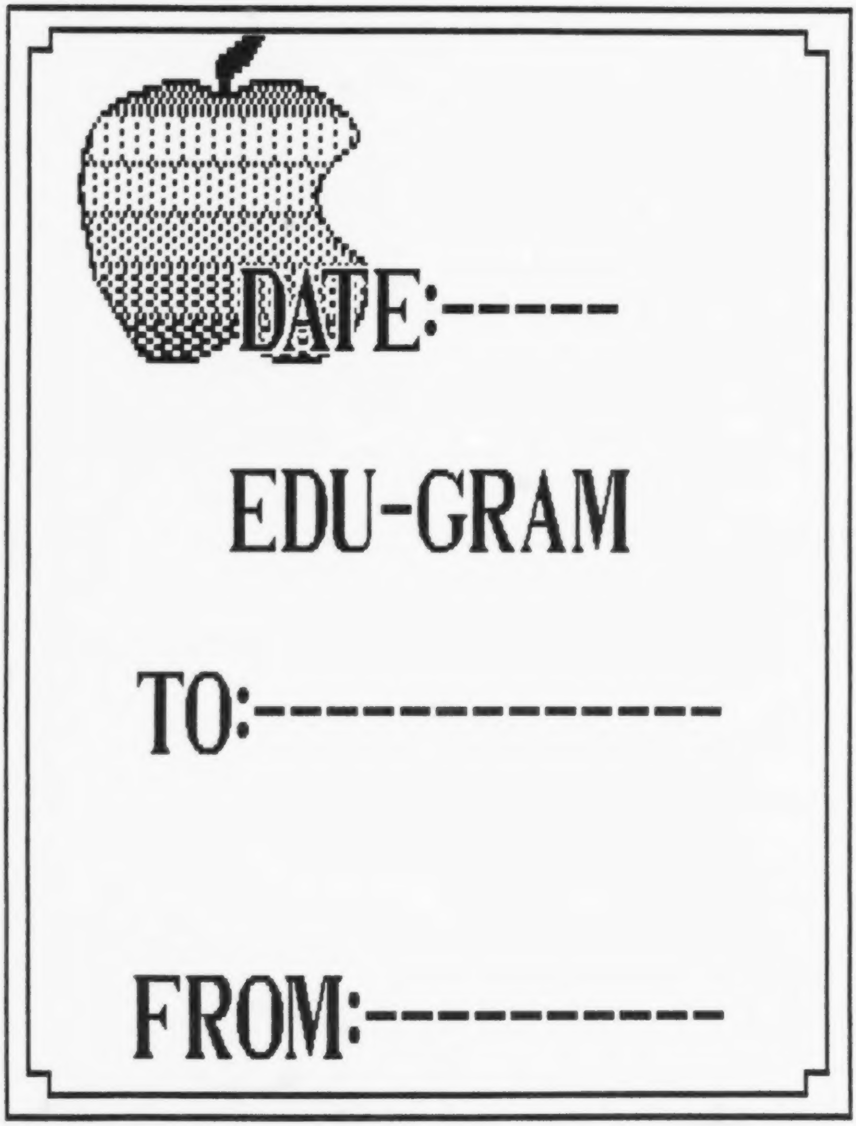
DATE

SOARING HIGH!

TO:--------------

FROM:-----------

Sample Positive Sheet



DATE:------

EDU-GRAM

TO:-------------

FROM:----------

APPENDIX F

WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT

Student____________________________________

Week of____________

Your child has improved________________________________

____

____

____

Your child would benefit from__________________________

____

____

____

Comment by Parent_____________________________________

____

____

Teacher______________________Parent___________________

APPENDIX G

Observing and Recording Student Progress Training

Agenda

Purposes of Observing and Recording Behavior

Observing Behavior

- Time-sampling
- Event-sampling

Recording Behavior

- Anecdotal Records
- Achievement Records

APPENDIX H

Effective Discipline Techniques for Teachers

Training Agenda

I. What is discipline?

II. Preventing Misbehavior

   A. Planning Ahead

   B. Setting Expectations

   C. Helping Children Become More Independent

   D. Importance of Following a Routine Schedule

   E. Calm Discipline

APPENDIX I

Effective Discipline Techniques for Parents

Training Agenda

I. What is Discipline?
   A. Causes of Misbehavior
   B. Setting Limits
   C. What to Do about Lies, Stealing and Agressive Behavior
   D. Practicing Positive Discipline
   E. Becoming a Calm Disciplinarian

APPENDIX J

Effective Discipline Techniques

Reference Materials for Teachers

Articles

Bullock, J. (1988, November). Altering aggression in young children. *The Education Digest*, pp. 44-47.

Clewett, A. (1988, October). Discipline as teaching rather than punishment. *The Education Digest*, pp. 42-45.

Mitchell, G. (1989). What can I do about stubborn behavior? *Scholastic Pre-K Today*, p. 22.

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Gallo, N. (1988). Why spanking takes the spunk out of kids. *Child*, pp. 146-147.

Brochure

Honig, A. (1987). *Love and learn: Discipline for young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Books

Brophy, J.E., Good, T. L. & Nedler. (1975). Classroom management. In *Teaching in the preschool*. New York: Haper & Row.

Stone, J. G. (1987). *A guide to discipline*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Video

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Appropriate Guidance*. Washington, DC: Author.

Bibliography

Classroom Management Reading List

APPENDIX K

Effective Discipline Techniques

Reference Materials for Parents

Video

National Association for the Education of Young Children. Appropriate Guidance. Washington, DC: Author.

Articles

Small, L. (1989, May). A conversation with Dr. Lawrence Balter. Sesame Street Magazine Parent Guide, pp 20-21.

Mitchell, G. (1989). What can I do about stubborn behavior? Scholastic Pre-K Today, p. 22.

Gallo, N. Why spanking takes the spunk out of kids. Child.

APPENDIX L

Age Appropriate Activities Training Agenda for Parents

Define Preschool Education Terms

View the Age Appropriate Activities Video

Question and Answer Period

Break

Role Play Ways to Initiate Learning during Play

View Commercial Learning Materials

Make-and-Take Learning Materials

APPENDIX M

Introduction to Parent Involvement

Training Agenda

Importance of Parent Involvement

Purposes of Parent Education

Handout

Basic Rights and Needs of Children of Any Age for the Proper Development

Articles

Parents Most Important Teacher

Parent, Home Are Keys to Child's Educational Gains

Reading: A Parent's View

Kindergarten Teachers Adapting to Students Differing Needs

APPENDIX N

Reading Readiness Training Agenda for Parents

I. Your Home is Your Child's First School

   A. Understanding the Parent Role

   B. Developing Physical, Intellectual, Speech and Language, Listening, Visual, Social and Emotional Skills

   C. Reading to Your Child

II. You Can Encourage Your Child to Read

   A. Factors that Influence Reading

   B. Suggestions for Stimulating Interest

III. Good Books Make Reading Fun for Your Child

   How to Choose Books for Preschoolers

APPENDIX O

Using Numbers with Preschoolers

Parent Training Agenda

I. Number Concepts Appropriate for Preschoolers

II. Activities Appropriate for Developing Math Concepts

APPENDIX P

Using Numbers with Preschoolers

Teacher Training Agenda

I. Teaching Number Concepts to Preschoolers

II. Developing a Number Center

III. Appropriate School Activities Which Influence the Development of Math Concepts

APPENDIX Q

Writing Activities for Preschoolers

Parent Training Agenda

I. The Writing Process

II. What Parents Can Do

APPENDIX R

Writing Activities for Preschoolers

Teacher Training Agenda

I. Supporting Children's Writing Efforts

II. Organizing the Learning Environment for Writing

APPENDIX S

Science Activities for Preschoolers

Parent Training Agenda

I. Using Nature for Developing Science Skills

II. Using Water for Developing Science Skills

APPENDIX T

Art and Music for Preschoolers

Parent Training Agenda

I. Advantages to Exposing Your Child to Art and Music

II. How to Assist Your Child in Appreciating Art and Music

APPENDIX U

Language Development

Training Agenda for Parents and Teachers

I. How Children Develop Oral and Written Language

II. Structuring the Environment to Promote Literary Development

APPENDIX V

Reducing Stress for Preschoolers

Parent Training Agenda

Definition of Stress

Signs of Stress

Ways to Reduce Stress

APPENDIX W

References for Reducing Stress in Preschoolers

Channing L. Bete Co. Inc. (1977). *About your child's emotional health!* South Deerfield, MA: Author

Elkind, D. (1982). Parental stresses: Their detrimental effects on the enotional well-being of children. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, *12*.

Jones, B. & Jones, M. (1983, January). Stress: It burns out kids, too. *Learning*.

McCracken, J. (Ed.). (1986). *Reducing stress in young children's lives*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Parenting Tips. (1987, August). *Ladies Home Journal*.

Stressbusters. (1989, April). *Ladies Home Journal*, p. 74.

APPENDIX X

Lesson Plans

EXAMPLE OF AN ACTIVITY PLANNING FORM FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE CENTERS FOR PRESCHOOL AGED (2 to 5 years) DFS 0372D Rev. 7/88

Teacher's Name __________

Week of 9-18 / 9-22

Unit or Theme Pets

Purpose To identify different Pets, and the Sounds they make

Ages of Children 2 year olds

AREA	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Group Time 1	Devotion 1) Jesus Loves me 2) Good morning 3) we're going to sing	4) whisper a prayer 5) Jesus loves the children prayer Thank you God	Roll Call →	→	→
Group Time 2	Talk about Pets Read: I am A Puppy	Play with See-N-Say Animal Sounds	Making animal Sounds Read Animal Sounds	Animal Collage (using items teacher has cut)	Teach 1 New [illegible] Five little Chickadees
Outdoor Time	Play What animal am I ?	Supervised free play	→	→	→
Special Activities		Talk about Community Helpers		Good manners	
House Keeping	Dress up fantasy play	→	→	→	→
Blocks	Building a dog house		Sorting shaped blocks		
Art		Play dough		Animal Collage (using items teacher has cut)	
Music	I wish I had a little red box		Sesame St. album - Singing and Movement		Five little Chickadees
Science				Things that sink or float	

ACTIVITY OR INTEREST AREAS (List your Activity Areas)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EXAMPLE OF AN ACTIVITY PLANNING FORM FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE CENTERS FOR PRESCHOOL AGED (2 to 5 years)

DFS 0372D
Rev. 7/88

Teacher's Name ______

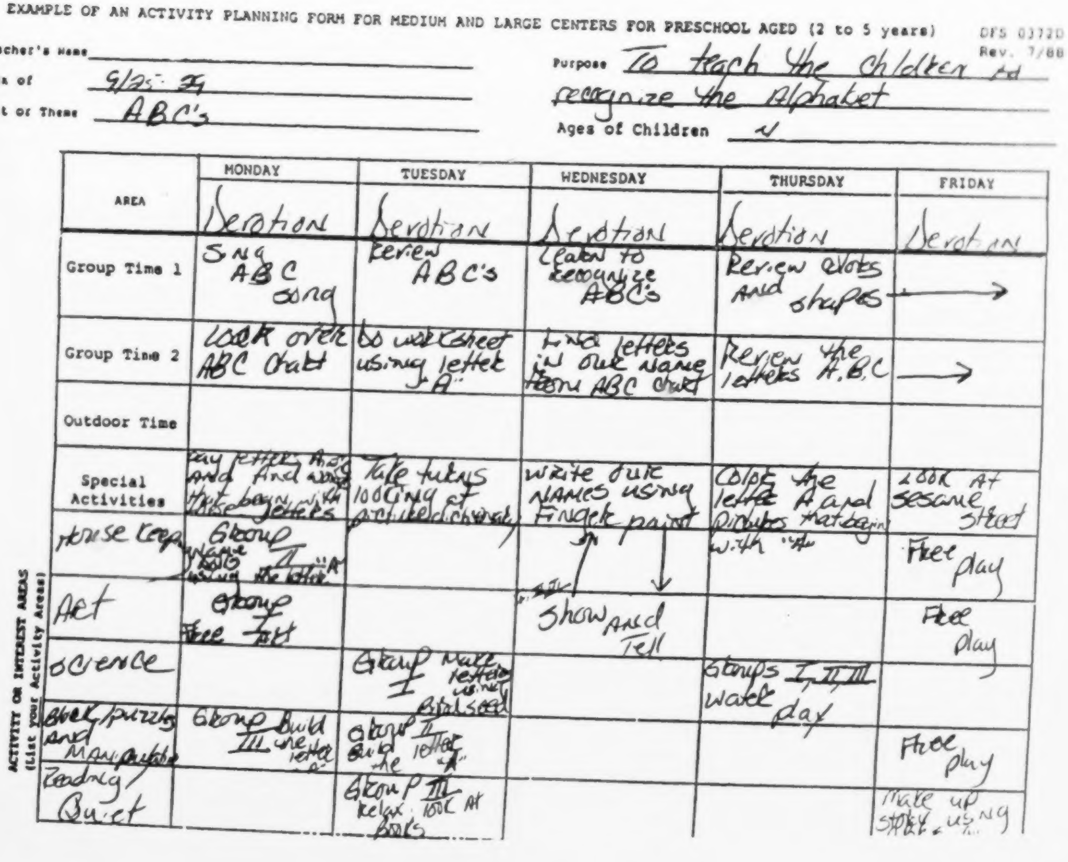
Week of 25 - 29

Unit or Theme Learning for Recognition

Purpose To develop motor. Skills

Ages of Children 3 yrs old

AREA	MONDAY Alphabet	TUESDAY Senses And Taste	WEDNESDAY Numbers	THURSDAY Farm Animals	FRIDAY Colors
Group Time 1	We are Studying the Alpha bet	We are Learning the 5 Senses	Learning to Count Numbers	We will name the different animals And the sounds they make	We are Learning our Colors
Group Time 2	We are Learning to Recognize our Alphabet	We are learning the different in Taste Sweet and Sour	Learning to recognize numbers	Discuss the Shapes	The color that All children need to stand up
Outdoor Time	We will play make a train	Jump Rope.	Action Song	Learning to dial Emergency #911	We will review Alphabet
Special Activities	We will work with puzzle	Potatoe Race	Sliding Board	We will feed the fish	Five Sense
ACTIVITY OR INTEREST AREAS (List your Activity Areas)	Finger Play	We will do Art work design	Good for Lungs: Blowing Balloons	Name the fish	Numbers
	We will exercise	Special music for body Movement	Hop Scotch	Talk about the fire. cone	Farm Animals
	Dress Up time Housekeeping	Song of Action I wish I had a Little Red box	Hula Hoop	We will discuss the turtle and how it protects itself	Little Red Ridinghood Story hour
	We play the instrument playing American Band	We will sing song in action High Stepping Horses	Ride on the Merry Go Round	We will watch film on Safety on the Playground	Hokie Pokie
	Story hour	Make A Circle. Play Roll the Ball	Musical Chairs	Then discuss the Farm	Simon Says



EXAMPLE OF AN ACTIVITY PLANNING FORM FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE CENTERS FOR PRESCHOOL AGED (2 to 5 years)

DFS 0372D
Rev. 7/88

Teacher's Name ______________________

Week of 9/25- 89

Unit or Theme ABC's

Purpose To teach the children to recognize the Alphabet

Ages of Children 4

AREA	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	Deration	Deration	Deration	Deration	Deration
Group Time 1	Sing ABC song	Review ABC's	Learn to recognize ABC's	Review colors and shapes	→
Group Time 2	Look over ABC Chart	Do worksheet using letter "A"	Find letters in our name from ABC chart	Review the letters A,B,C	→
Outdoor Time					
Special Activities	Say letters A,B,C and find words that begin with these letters	Take turns looking at picture dictionary	Write our names using Finger paint	Color the letter A and pictures that begin with "A"	Look At Sesame Street
House keeping	Group II name song using the letter "A"				Free play
Art	Group I Free Art		Show and Tell		Free play
Science		Group I Make letters using Birdseed		Groups I, II, III water day	
Block, puzzles and Manipulatives	Group III Build the letter "A"	Group II Build the letter "A"			Free play
Reading/ Quiet		Group III relax, look At Books			Make up story using

ACTIVITY OR INTEREST AREAS (List your Activity Areas)

APPENDIX Y

Room Arrangement Training Agenda

I. How Room Arrangement Affects the Behavior of Preschoolers

II. Placing Science Activities in the Room

  A. Teaching Science to Preschoolers

  B. Setting Up a Science Center

  C. Fun Science Activities

III. Improving the Book Area

  A. Setting Up a Book Center

  B. The Importance of Reading Aloud

  C. Ways to Acquire New Books

APPENDIX Z

Room Arrangement References for Teachers

Beaty, J. J. (1984). Establishing a Learning Environment. In Skills for Preschool Teachers (pp. 40-60). Columbus: Charles E. Merrill.

Danoff, J., Breitbart, V. & Barr, E. (1977). Room Arrangement. In Open for Children (pp. 60-71). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Environments, Inc. (1989, April). Planning your classroom environment. Scholastic Pre-K Today.

APPENDIX AA

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM LESSON PLAN

Lesson Plan 1

Buiding Self-Esteem

Goals:
1. To build self-esteem.
2. To introduce common safety rules.
3. To stimulate listening skills

Objectives:
1. The teacher will provide at least one positive reinforcer a day for five days for each preschooler.
2. The parent will provide one positive gesture a day for seven days for his/her preschooler.
3. After the preschoolers have heard the safefty stories three times they will be able to state the safety rules.

Materials: Teacher: 25 Ways to Say "Good for You" Handout

Parent:
1. Building Self-Esteem Activities
2. Self-Esteem Building Messages Handout
3. 100 Ways for a Parent to say "Very Good" Handout

Home-School Library: *Stay Safe, Play Safe*

Procedures: Classroom Activity. Sit with the children in a circle. Read the stories according to the directions in the book allowing the children to name the safety rules as a group. Compliment their progress.

Home Activity. The parent will choose a self-esteem building activity from the handout for his/her preschooler each day for a week.

Classroom and Home Activities. Use the handouts to provide verbal positive reinforcement.

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM LESSON PLAN

Building Self-Esteem

It is important for parents to let their children know that they are loved and appreciated. To assist you in building your child's self-esteem, choose an activity each day for the next seven days.

READ A STORY TO ME.

PLAN TO DO SOMETHING
SPECIAL WITH ME.

TELL ME ALL ABOUT MY
GOOD QUALITIES.

TAKE ME FOR A WALK
AND TELL ME THE
THINGS YOU DID
AS A CHILD.

HOLD ME IN YOUR LAP
AND TELL ME A STORY.

TELL ME THAT YOU
LOVE ME AND HOLD
ME CLOSE.

FIX MY FAVORITE
MEAL.

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